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LIFE AND VOYAGES OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

& THE VOYAGES & DISCOVERIES OF THE COMPANIONS OF COLUMBUS

BY WASHINGTON IRVING

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Volume II.

NEW YORK & LONDON G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS 1895

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The Life and Voyages

of

Christopher Columbus

AUTHOR'S AUTOGRAPH EDITION

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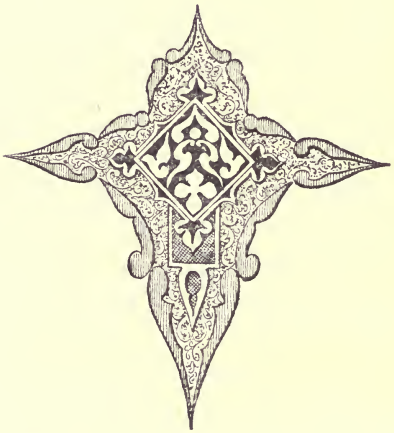

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THE LIFE AND VOYAGES OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

Chapter VIII.

PAPAL BULL OF PARTITION—PREPARATIONS FOR A SECOND VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS.

[1493.]

IN the midst of their rejoicings the Spanish sovereigns lost no time in taking every measure necessary to secure their new acquisitions. Although it was supposed that the countries just discovered were part of the territories of the Grand Khan and of other Oriental princes considerably advanced in civilization, yet there does not appear to have been the least doubt of the right of their Catholic Majesties to take possession of them. During the Crusades a doctrine had been established

among Christian princes extremely favorable to their ambitious designs. According to this they had a right to invade, ravage, and seize upon the territories of all infidel nations under the plea of defeating the enemies of Christ, and extending the sway of his Church on earth. In conformity to the same doctrine the Pope, from his supreme authority over all temporal things, was considered as empowered to dispose of all heathen lands to such potentates as would engage to reduce them to the dominion of the Church, and to propagate the true faith among their benighted inhabitants. It was in virtue of this power that Pope Martin V. and his successors had conceded to the Crown of Portugal all the lands it might discover from Cape Bojador to the Indies ; and the Catholic sovereigns, in a treaty concluded in 1479 with the Portuguese monarch, had engaged themselves to respect the territorial rights thus acquired. It was to this treaty that John II. alluded in his conversation with Columbus, wherein he suggested his title to the newly discovered countries.

On the first intelligence received from the Admiral of his success, therefore, the Spanish sovereigns took the immediate precaution to secure the sanction of the Pope. Alexander, VI. had been recently elevated to the Holy

Chair; a pontiff whom some historians have stigmatized with every vice and crime that could disgrace humanity, but whom all have represented as eminently able and politic. He was a native of Valencia, and being born a subject of the crown of Arragon, it might be inferred, was favorably disposed to Ferdinand; but in certain questions which had come before him, he had already shown a disposition not the most cordial towards the Catholic monarch. At all events, Ferdinand was well aware of his worldly and perfidious character, and endeavored to manage him accordingly. He despatched ambassadors, therefore, to the court of Rome, announcing the new discovery as an extraordinary triumph of the Faith; and setting forth the great glory and gain which must redound to the Church from the dissemination of Christianity throughout these vast and heathen lands. Care was also taken to state, that the present discovery did not in the least interfere with the possessions ceded by the Holy Chair to Portugal, all of which had been sedulously avoided. Ferdinand, who was at least as politic as he was pious, insinuated a hint at the same time, by which the Pope might perceive that he was determined at all events to maintain his important acquisitions. His ambassadors were instructed to state that, in the opinion of many

learned men, these newly discovered lands having been taken possession of by the Catholic sovereigns their title to the same did not require the papal sanction; still, as pious princes, obedient to the Holy Chair, they supplicated his Holiness to issue a bull, making a concession of them, and of such others as might be discovered, to the Crown of Castile.

The tidings of the discovery were received, in fact, with great astonishment and no less exultation by the court of Rome. The Spanish sovereigns had already elevated themselves to high consequence in the eyes of the Church, by their war against the Moors of Spain, which had been considered in the light of a pious crusade; and though richly repaid by the acquisition of the kingdom of Granada, it was thought to entitle them to the gratitude of all Christendom. The present discovery was a still greater achievement; it was the fulfilment of one of the sublime promises to the Church, it was giving to it "the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession." No difficulty, therefore, was made in granting what was considered but a modest request for so important a service; though it is probable that the acquiescence of the worldly minded pontiff was quickened by the insinuations of the political monarch.

A bull was accordingly issued, dated May 2, 1493, ceding to the Spanish sovereigns the same rights, privileges, and indulgences, in respect to the newly discovered regions, as had been accorded to the Portuguese with regard to their African discoveries, under the same condition of planting and propagating the Catholic faith. To prevent any conflicting claims, however, between the two powers in the wide range of their discoveries, another bull was issued on the following day, containing the famous line of demarcation, by which their territories were thought to be clearly and permanently defined. This was an ideal line drawn from the north to the south pole, a hundred leagues to the west of the Azores, and the Cape Verde Islands. All land discovered by the Spanish navigators to the west of this line, and which had not been taken possession of by any Christian power before the preceding Christmas, was to belong to the Spanish Crown ; all land discovered in the contrary direction was to belong to Portugal. It seems never to have occurred to the Pontiff, that by pushing their opposite careers of discovery they might some day or other come again in collision and renew the question of territorial right at the antipodes.

In the meantime, without waiting for the sanction of the court of Rome, the utmost ex-

ertions were made by the sovereigns to fit out a second expedition. To insure regularity and despatch in the affairs relative to the New World, they were placed under the superintendence of Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, Archdeacon of Seville, who was successively promoted to the sees of Bajadoz, Palencia, and Burgos, and finally appointed patriarch of the Indies. He was a man of family and influence; his brothers Alonzo and Antonio were seniors, or lords, of Coca and Alaejos, and the latter was Comptroller-General of Castile. Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca is represented by Las Casas as a worldly man, more calculated for temporal than spiritual concerns, and well adapted to the bustling occupation of fitting out and manning armadas. Notwithstanding the high ecclesiastical dignities to which he rose, his worldly employments seem never to have been considered incompatible with his sacred functions. Enjoying the perpetual though unmerited favor of the sovereigns, he maintained the control of Indian affairs for about thirty years. He must undoubtedly have possessed talents for business, to insure him such a perpetuity of office; but he was malignant and vindictive, and in the gratification of his private resentments, not only heaped wrongs and sorrows upon the

most illustrious of the early discoverers, but frequently impeded the progress of their enterprises, to the great detriment of the Crown. This he was enabled to do privately and securely by his official situation. His perfidious conduct is repeatedly alluded to, but in guarded terms, by contemporary writers of weight and credit, such as the Curate of Los Palacios, and the Bishop Las Casas; but they evidently were fearful of expressing the fulness of their feelings. Subsequent Spanish historians, always more or less controlled by ecclesiastical supervision, have likewise dealt too favorably with this base-minded man. He deserves to be held up as a warning example of those perfidious beings in office, who too often lie like worms at the root of honorable enterprise, blighting, by their unseen influence, the fruits of glorious action, and disappointing the hopes of nations.

To assist Fonseca in his duties, Francisco Pinelo was associated with him as treasurer, and Juan de Soria as *contador*, or comptroller. Their office, for the transaction of Indian affairs, was fixed at Seville; extending its vigilance at the same time to the port of Cadiz, where a custom-house was established for this new branch of navigation. Such was the germ of the Royal India House, which after-

wards rose to such great power and importance. A correspondent office was ordered to be instituted at Hispaniola, under the direction of the Admiral. These officers were to interchange registers of the cargoes, crews, and munitions of each ship, by accountants who sailed with it. All persons thus employed were dependants upon the two comptrollers-general, superior ministers of the royal revenue,—since the Crown was to be at all the expenses of the colony, and to receive all the emoluments.

The most minute and rigorous account was to be exacted of all expenses and proceeds; and the most vigilant caution observed as to the persons employed in the concerns of the newly discovered lands. No one was permitted to go there either to trade or to form an establishment, without express license from the sovereigns, from Columbus, or from Fonseca, under the heaviest penalties. The ignorance of the age as to enlarged principles of commerce, and the example of the Portuguese in respect to their African possessions, have been cited in excuse of the narrow and jealous spirit here manifested; but it always more or less influenced the policy of Spain in her colonial regulations.

Another instance of the despotic sway main-

tained by the Crown over commerce, is manifested in a royal order, that all ships in the port of Andalusia, with their captains, pilots, and crews, should be held in readiness to serve in this expedition. Columbus and Fonseca were authorized to freight or purchase any of those vessels they might think proper, and to take them by force, if refused, even though they had been freighted by other persons, paying what they should conceive a reasonable price. They were furthermore authorized to take the requisite provisions, arms, and ammunition, from any place or vessel in which they might be found, paying a fair price to the owners; and they might compel, not merely mariners, but any officer holding any rank or station whatever, whom they should deem necessary to the service, to embark on the fleet on a reasonable pay and salary. The civil authorities, and all persons of rank and standing, were called upon to render all requisite aid in expediting the armament, and warned against creating any impediment, under penalty of privation of office and confiscation of estate.

To provide for the expenses of the expedition, the royal revenue arising from two thirds of the church-tithes was placed at the disposition of Pinelo; and other funds were drawn

from a disgraceful source, from the jewels and other valuables, the sequestrated property of the unfortunate Jews banished from the kingdom according to a bigoted edict of the preceding year. As these resources were still inadequate Pinelo was authorized to supply the deficiency by a loan. Requisitions were likewise made for provisions of all kinds, as well as for artillery, powder, muskets, lances, corselets, and cross-bows. This latter weapon, notwithstanding the introduction of fire-arms, was still preferred by many to the arquebuse, and considered more formidable and destructive; the other having to be used with a match-lock, and being so heavy as to require an iron rest. The military stores which had accumulated during the war with the Moors of Granada, furnished a great part of these supplies. Almost all the preceding orders were issued by

ARQUEBUSIER.

the 23d of May, while Columbus was yet at Barcelona. Rarely has there been witnessed such a scene of activity in the dilatory offices of Spain.

As the conversion of the heathen was professed to be the grand object of these discoveries, twelve zealous and able ecclesiastics were chosen for the purpose, to accompany the expedition. Among these was Bernardo Buyl or Boyle, a Benedictine monk, of talent and reputed sanctity, but one of those subtle politicians of the cloister, who in those days glided into all temporal concerns. He had acquitted himself with success in recent negotiations with France, relative to the restitution of Rousillon. Before the sailing of the fleet he was appointed by the Pope his apostolical vicar for the New World, and placed as superior over his ecclesiastical brethren. This pious mission was provided with all things necessary for the dignified performance of its functions; the Queen supplying from her own chapel the ornaments and vestments to be used in all solemn ceremonies. Isabella, from the first, took the most warm and compassionate interest in the welfare of the Indians. Won by the accounts given by Columbus of their gentleness and simplicity, and looking upon them as committed by Heaven to her especial care, her heart was

filled with concern at their destitute and ignorant condition. She ordered that great care should be taken of their religious instruction; that they should be treated with the utmost kindness; and enjoined Columbus to inflict signal punishment on all Spaniards who should be guilty of outrage or injustice towards them.

By way, it was said, of offering to Heaven the first-fruits of these pagan nations, the six Indians whom Columbus had brought to Barcelona were baptized with great state and ceremony; the King, the Queen, and Prince Juan officiating as sponsors. Great hopes were entertained that, on their return to their native country, they would facilitate the introduction of Christianity among their countrymen. One of them, at the request of Prince Juan, remained in his household, but died not long afterwards. A Spanish historian remarked that, according to what ought to be our pious belief, he was the first of his nation that entered Heaven.*

Before the departure of Columbus from Barcelona, the provisional agreement made at Santa Fé was confirmed, granting him the titles, emoluments, and prerogatives of admiral, viceroy, and governor of all the countries he

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 5.

had discovered, or might discover. He was also intrusted with the royal seal, with authority to use the name of their majesties in granting letters-patent and commissions within the bounds of his jurisdiction; with the right, also, in case of absence, to appoint a person in his place, and to invest him, for the time, with the same powers.

It had been premised in the agreement, that for all vacant offices in the government of the islands and mainland he should nominate three candidates, out of which number the sovereign should make a choice; but now to save time and to show their confidence in Columbus, they empowered him to appoint at once such persons as he thought proper, who were to hold their offices during the royal pleasure. He had likewise the title and command of captain-general of the armament about to sail, with unqualified powers as to the government of the crews, the establishments to be formed in the New World, and the ulterior discoveries to be undertaken.

This was the honeymoon of the royal favor, during which Columbus enjoyed the unbounded and well-merited confidence of his sovereigns, before envious minds had dared to insinuate a doubt of his integrity. After receiving every mark of public honor and private

regard, he took leave of the sovereigns on the 28th of May. The whole court accompanied him from the palace to his dwelling, and attended also to pay him farewell honors on his departure from Barcelona for Seville.

Chapter IX.

DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE COURTS OF SPAIN AND PORTUGAL WITH RESPECT TO THE NEW DISCOVERIES.

[1493.]

THE anxiety of the Spanish monarchy for the speedy departure of the expedition was heightened by the proceedings of the court of Portugal. John II. had unfortunately among his councillors certain politicians of that short-sighted class who mistake craft for wisdom. By adopting their perfidious policy he had lost the New World when it was an object of honorable enterprise; in compliance with their advice, he now sought to retrieve it by stratagem. He had accordingly prepared a large armament, the avowed object of which was an expedition to Africa, but its real destination to seize upon the newly discovered countries. To lull suspicion, Don Ruy de Sande was sent

ambassador to the Spanish court, requesting permission to procure certain prohibited articles from Spain for this African voyage. He required, also, that the Spanish sovereigns should forbid their subjects to fish beyond Cape Bojador, until the possessions of the two nations should be properly defined. The discovery of Columbus, the real object of solicitude, was treated as an incidental affair. The manner of his arrival and reception in Portugal was mentioned; the congratulations of King John on the happy result of his voyage; his satisfaction at finding that the Admiral had been instructed to steer westward from the Canary Islands, and his hope that the Castilian sovereigns would continue to enjoin a similar track on their navigators,—all to the south of those islands being granted by papal bull to the Crown of Portugal. He concluded by intimating the entire confidence of King John, that should any of the newly discovered islands appertain by right to Portugal, the matter would be adjusted in that spirit of amity which existed between the two crowns.

Ferdinand was too wary a politician to be easily deceived. He had received early intelligence of the real designs of King John, and before the arrival of his ambassador had himself despatched Don Lope de Herrera to the

Portuguese court, furnished with double instructions, and with two letters of widely opposite tenor. The first was couched in affectionate terms, acknowledging the hospitality and kindness shown to Columbus, and communicating the nature of his discoveries; requesting at the same time that the Portuguese navigators might be prohibited from visiting those newly discovered lands, in the same manner that the Spanish sovereigns had prohibited their subjects from interfering with the African possessions of Portugal.

In case, however, the ambassador should find that King John had either sent or was about to send vessels to the New World, he was to withhold the amicable letter, and present the other, couched in stern and peremptory terms, and forbidding any enterprise of the kind.* A keen diplomatic game ensued between the two sovereigns, perplexing to any spectator not acquainted with the secret of their play. Resende, in his history of King John II., informs us that the Portuguese monarch, by large presents, or rather bribes, held certain of the confidential members of the Castilian cabinet in his interest, who informed him of the most secret councils of their court.

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii. Zurita, *Anales de Arragon*, lib. i., cap. 25.

The roads were thronged with couriers ; scarce was an intention expressed by Ferdinand to his ministers, but it was conveyed to his rival monarch. The result was that the Spanish sovereigns seemed as if under the influence of some enchantment. King John anticipated all their movements, and appeared to dive into their very thoughts. Their ambassadors were crossed on the road by Portuguese ambassadors, empowered to settle the very points about which they were going to make remonstrances. Frequently, when Ferdinand proposed a sudden and perplexing question to the envoys at his court, which apparently would require fresh instructions from the sovereigns, he would be astonished by a prompt and positive reply ; most of the questions which were likely to occur having, through secret information, been foreseen and provided for. As a surmise of treachery in the cabinet might naturally arise, King John, while he rewarded his agents in secret, endeavored to divert suspicions from them upon others, making rich presents of jewels to the Duke de Infantado and other Spanish grandees of incorruptible integrity. *

* Resende, *Vida del Rey Dom Joam II.*, cap. 157. Faria y Souza, *Europa Portuguesa*, tom. ii., cap. 4, p. 3.

Such is the intriguing diplomatic craft which too often passes for refined policy, and is extolled as the wisdom of the cabinet; but all corrupt and disingenious measures are unworthy of an enlightened politician and a magnanimous prince. The grand principles of right and wrong operate the same way between nations as between individuals; fair and open conduct and inviolable faith, however they may appear adverse to present purposes, are the only kind of policy that will insure ultimate and honorable success.

King John having received intelligence in the furtive manner that has been mentioned, of the double instructions furnished to Don Lope de Herrera, received him in such a manner as to prevent any resort to his peremptory letter. He had already despatched an extra envoy to the Spanish court to keep it in good humor, and he now appointed Doctor Pero Diaz and Don Ruy de Pena ambassadors to the Spanish sovereigns to adjust all questions relative to the new discoveries, and promised that no vessel should be permitted to sail on a voyage of discovery within sixty days after their arrival at Barcelona.

These ambassadors were instructed to propose, as a mode of effectually settling all claims, that a line should be drawn from the

Canaries due west; all lands and seas north of it to appertain to the Castilian court; all south to the Crown of Portugal, excepting any islands already in possession of either power.*

Ferdinand had now the vantage-ground; his object was to gain time for the preparation and departure of Columbus, by entangling King John in long diplomatic negotiations.† In reply to his proposals he despatched Don Pedro de Ayala and Don Garcia Lopez de Caravajal on a solemn embassy to Portugal, in which there was great outward pomp and parade and many professions of amity, but the whole purport of which was to propose to submit the territorial questions which had risen between them to arbitration, or to the court of Rome. This stately embassy moved with becoming slowness, but a special envoy was sent in advance to apprise the King of Portugal of its approach, in order to keep him waiting for its communications.

King John understood the whole nature and object of the embassy, and felt that Ferdinand was foiling him. The ambassadors at length arrived and delivered their credentials with great form and ceremony. As they retired

* Zurita, lib. i., cap. 25. Herrera, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 5.

† Vasconcellos, *Don Juan II.*, lib. vi.

from his presence he looked after them contemptuously. "This embassy from our cousin," said he, "wants both head and feet." He alluded to the character both of the mission and the envoys. Don Garcia de Caravajal was vain and frivolous, and Don Pedro de Ayala was lame of one leg.*

In the height of his vexation King John is even said to have held out some vague show of hostile intentions, taking occasion to let the ambassadors discover him reviewing his cavalry and dropping ambiguous words in their hearing which might be construed into something of menacing import.† The embassy returned to Castile, leaving him in a state of perplexity and irritation; but whatever might be his chagrin, his discretion prevented him from coming to an open rupture. He had some hopes of interference on the part of the Pope, to whom he had sent an embassy complaining of the pretended discoveries of the Spaniards as infringing the territories granted to Portugal by papal bull, and earnestly imploring redress. Here, as has been shown, his wary antagonist had been beforehand with him and he was doomed again to

* Vasconcellos, lib. vi. Barros, *Asia*, decad i., lib. iii., cap. 2.

† Vasconcellos, lib. vi.

be foiled. The only reply his ambassador received was a reference to the line of partition from pole to pole, so sagely devised by his holiness.* Such was this royal game of diplomacy, where the parties were playing for a newly discovered world. John II. was able and intelligent, and crafty councillors to advise him in all his moves ; but whenever deep and subtle policy was required Ferdinand was master of the game.

* Herrera, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 5.

Chapter X.

FURTHER PREPARATIONS FOR THE SECOND VOYAGE —CHARACTER OF ALONSO DE OJEDA—DIFFERENCE OF COLUMBUS WITH SORIA AND FONSECA.

[1493.]

DISTRUSTFUL of some attempt on the part of Portugal to interfere with their discoveries, the Spanish sovereigns in the course of their negotiations wrote repeatedly to Columbus urging him to hasten his departure. His zeal, however, needed no incitement; immediately on arriving at Seville, in the beginning of June, he proceeded with all diligence to fit out the armament, making use of the powers given him to put in requisition the ships and crews which were in the harbors of Andalusia. He was joined soon after by Fonseca and Soria, who had remained for a time at Barcelona; and with their united exertions a fleet of seventeen vessels, large and small, was soon

in a state of preparation. The best pilots were chosen for the service, and the crews were mustered in presence of Soria, the Comptroller. A number of skilful husbandmen, miners, carpenters, and other mechanics, were engaged for the projected colony. Horses, both for military purposes and for stocking the country, cattle and domestic animals of all kinds were likewise provided. Grain, seeds of various plants, vines, sugar-canes, grafts, and saplings, were embarked, together with a great quantity of merchandise, consisting of trinkets, beads, hawks'-bells, looking-glasses, and other showy trifles, calculated for trafficking with the natives. Nor was there wanting an abundant supply of provisions of all sorts, munitions of war, and medicines and refreshments for the sick.

An extraordinary degree of excitement prevailed respecting this expedition. The most extravagant fancies were entertained with respect to the New World. The accounts given by the voyagers who had visited it were full of exaggeration; for in fact they had nothing but vague and confused notions concerning it, like the recollection of a dream, and it has been shown that Columbus himself had beheld everything through the most de-

lusive medium. The vivacity of his descriptions, and the sanguine anticipations of his ardent spirit, while they roused the public to a wonderful degree of enthusiasm, prepared the way for bitter disappointment. The cupidity of the avaricious was inflamed with the idea of regions of unappropriated wealth, where the rivers rolled over golden sands, and the mountains teemed with gems and precious metals; where the groves produced spices and perfumes, and the shores of the ocean were sown with pearl. Others had conceived visions of a loftier kind. It was a romantic and stirring age, and the wars with the Moors being over, and hostilities with the French suspended, the bold and restless spirits of the nation, impatient of the monotony of peaceful life, were eager for employment. To these, the New World presented a vast field for wild enterprise and extraordinary adventure, so congenial to the Spanish character in that period of its meridian fervor and brilliancy. Many *hidalgos* of high rank, officers of the royal household, and Andalusian cavaliers, schooled in arms, and inspired with a passion for hardy achievements by the romantic wars of Granada, pressed into the expedition, some in the royal service, others at their own cost. To them it was the commence-

ment of a new series of crusades, surpassing in extent and splendor the chivalrous enterprises of the Holy Land. They pictured to themselves vast and beautiful islands of the ocean to be overrun and subdued; their internal wonders to be explored, and the banner of the cross to be planted on the walls of the cities they were supposed to contain. Thence they were to make their way to the shores of India, or rather Asia, penetrate into Mangi and Cathay, convert or what was the same thing conquer the Grand Khan, and thus open a glorious career of arms among the splendid countries and semi-barbarous nations of the East. Thus no one had any definite idea of the object or nature of the service on which he was embarking, or the situation and character of the region to which he was bound. Indeed, during this fever of the imagination, had sober facts and cold realities been presented, they would have been rejected with disdain; for there is nothing of which the public is more impatient than of being disturbed in the indulgence of any of its golden dreams.

Among the noted personages who engaged in the expedition, was a young cavalier of the name of Don Alonso de Ojeda, celebrated for his extraordinary personal endowments and

his daring spirit; and who distinguished himself among the early discoverers by many perilous expeditions and singular exploits. He was of a good family, cousin-german to the venerable Father Alonso de Ojeda, Inquisitor of Spain; had been brought up under the patronage of the Duke of Medina Celi, and had served in the wars against the Moors. He was of small stature, but vigorous make, well proportioned, dark complexioned, of handsome, animated countenance, and incredible strength and agility. Expert at all kinds of weapons, accomplished in all manly and warlike exercises, and an admirable horseman, and a partisan soldier of the highest order; bold of heart, free of spirit, open of hand; fierce in fight, quick in brawl, but ready to forgive and prone to forget an injury; he was for a long time the idol of the rash and roving youth who engaged in the early expeditions to the New World, and has been made the hero of many wonderful tales. On introducing him to historical notice Las Casas gives an anecdote of one of his exploits, which would be unworthy of record, but that it exhibits the singular character of the man.

Queen Isabella being in the tower of the cathedral at Seville, better known as the Giralda, Ojeda, to entertain her Majesty, and to give

proofs of his courage and agility, mounted on a great beam which projected in the air, twenty feet from the tower, at such an immense height from the ground, that the people below looked like dwarfs, and it was enough to make Ojeda himself shudder to look down. Along this beam he walked briskly, and with as much confidence as though he had been pacing his chamber. When he arrived at the end, he stood on one leg, lifting the other in the air; then turning nimbly round, he returned in the same way to the tower, unaffected by the giddy height, whence the least false step would have precipitated him and dashed him to pieces. He afterwards stood with one foot on the beam, and placing the other against the wall of the building threw an orange to the summit of the tower, a proof, says Las Casas, of immense muscular strength. Such was Alonso de Ojeda, who soon became conspicuous among the followers of Columbus, and was always foremost in every enterprise of an adventurous nature; who courted peril as if for the very love of danger, and seemed to fight more for the pleasure of fighting than for the sake of distinction.*

The number of persons permitted to embark in this expedition had been limited to one thou-

* Las Casas, lib. i., MS. Pizarro, *Varones Illustres.* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 5.

sand; but such was the urgent application of volunteers to be allowed to enlist without pay, that the number had increased to twelve hundred. Many more were refused for want of room in the ships for their accommodation, but some contrived to get admitted by stealth, so that eventually about fifteen hundred set sail in the fleet. As Columbus in his laudable zeal for the welfare of the enterprise, provided everything that might be necessary in various possible emergencies, the expenses of the outfit exceeded what had been anticipated. This gave rise to occasional demurs on the part of the comptroller Juan de Soria, who sometimes refused to sign the accounts of the Admiral, and in the course of their transactions seemed to have forgotten the deference due both to his character and station. For this he received repeated and severe reprimands from the sovereigns, who emphatically commanded that Columbus should be treated with the greatest respect, and everything done to facilitate his plans and yield him satisfaction. From similar injunctions inserted in the royal letters to Fonseca, the Archdeacon of Seville, it is probable that he also had occasionally indulged in the captious exercise of his official powers. He appears to have demurred to various requisitions of Columbus, particularly one for foot-

men and other domestics for his immediate service, to form his household and retinue as admiral and viceroy—a demand which was considered superfluous by the prelate, as all who embarked in the expedition were at his command. In reply, the sovereigns ordered that he should be allowed ten *escuderos de à pie*, or footmen, and twenty persons in other domestic capacities, and reminded Fonseca of their charge that, both in the nature and mode of his transactions with the Admiral, he should study to give him content; observing that, as the whole armament was intrusted to his command, it was but reasonable that his wishes should be consulted, and no one embarrass him with punctilios and difficulties.*

These trivial differences are worthy of particular notice, from the effect they appear to have had on the mind of Fonseca, for from them we must date the rise of that singular hostility which he ever afterwards manifested towards Columbus; which every year increased in rancor, and which he gratified in the most invidious manner, by secretly multiplying impediments and vexations in his path.

While the expedition was yet lingering in port, intelligence was received that a Portuguese caravel had set sail from Madeira and

* Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom. ii., *Documentos*, No. 62–66.

steered for the west. Suspicions were immediately awakened that she was bound for the lately discovered lands. Columbus wrote an account of it to the sovereigns, and proposed to despatch a part of his fleet in pursuit of her. His proposition was approved, but not carried into effect. On remonstrances being made to the court at Lisbon, King John declared that the vessel had sailed without his permission, and that he would send three caravels to bring her back. This only served to increase the jealousy of the Spanish monarchs, who considered the whole a deep-laid stratagem, and that it was intended the vessels should join their forces and pursue their course together to the New World. Columbus was urged, therefore, to depart without an hour's delay, and instructed to steer wide of Cape St. Vincent, and entirely avoid the Portuguese coasts and islands, for fear of molestation. If he met with any vessels in the seas he had explored, he was to seize them, and inflict rigorous punishment on the crews. Fonseca was also ordered to be on the alert, and in case any expedition sailed from Portugal to send double the force after it. These precautions, however, proved unnecessary. Whether such caravels actually did sail, and whether they were sent with sinister motives by Portugal, does not

appear; nothing was either seen or heard of them by Columbus in the course of his voyage.

It may be as well, for the sake of distinctness, to anticipate, in this place, the regular course of history, and mention the manner in which this territorial question was finally settled between the rival sovereigns. It was impossible for King John to repress his disquiet at the indefinite enterprises of the Spanish monarchs; he did not know how far they might extend, and whether they might not forestall him in all his anticipated discoveries in India. Finding, however, all attempts fruitless to gain by stratagem an advantage over his wary and skilful antagonist, and despairing of any further assistance from the court of Rome, he had recourse at last to fair and amicable negotiations, and found, as is generally the case with those who turn aside into the inviting but crooked paths of craft, that had he kept to the line of frank and open policy he would have saved himself a world of perplexity, and have arrived sooner at his object. He offered to leave to the Spanish sovereigns the free prosecution of their western discovery, and to conform to the plan of partition by meridian line. But he represented that this line had not been drawn far enough to the west; that while it left the wide ocean free to

the range of Spanish enterprise, his navigators could not venture more than a hundred leagues west of his possessions, and had no scope or sea-room for their southern voyages.

After much difficulty and discussion this momentous dispute was adjusted by deputies from the two Crowns, who met at Tordesillas in Old Castile in the following year, and on the 7th of June, 1494, signed a treaty by which the papal line of partition was moved to three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. It was agreed that within six months an equal number of caravels and mariners on the part of the two nations should rendezvous at the island of the Grand Canary, provided with men learned in astronomy and navigation. They were to proceed thence to the Cape Verde Islands, and thence westward three hundred and seventy leagues, and determine the proposed line from pole to pole, dividing the ocean between the two nations.* Each of the two powers engaged solemnly to observe the bounds thus prescribed, and to prosecute no enterprise beyond its proper limits; though it was agreed that the Spanish navigators might traverse freely the eastern parts of the ocean in prosecuting their rightful

* Zurita, *Hist. del Rey Fernand.*, lib. i., cap. 22. Vasconcellos, lib. vi.

voyages. Various circumstances impeded the proposed expedition to determine the line, but the treaty remained in force and prevented all further discussions.

Thus, says Vasconcellos, this great question, the greatest ever agitated between the two Crowns, for it was the partition of a new world, was amicably settled by the prudence and address of two of the most politic monarchs that ever swayed the sceptre. It was arranged to the satisfaction of both parties, each holding himself entitled to the vast countries that might be discovered within his boundary, without any regard to the rights of the native inhabitants.

Book VII.

Chapter II.

DEPARTURE OF COLUMBUS ON HIS SECOND VOYAGE —DISCOVERY OF THE CARIBBEE ISLANDS.

[1493.]

THE departure of Columbus on his second voyage of discovery presented a brilliant contrast to his gloomy embarkation at Palos. On the 25th of September, at the dawn of day, the bay of Cadiz was whitened by his fleet. There were three large ships of heavy burden,* and fourteen caravels loitering with flapping sails and awaiting the signal to get under way. The harbor resounded with the well-known note of the sailor, hoisting sail or weighing anchor;

* Peter Martyr says they were caracks (a large species of merchant vessel, principally used in coasting trade), of one hundred tons burden, and that two of the caravels were much larger than the rest, and more capable of bearing decks from the size of their masts. —Decad. i., lib. i.

a motley crowd were hurrying on board and taking leave of their friends in the confidence of a prosperous voyage and triumphant return. There was the high-spirited cavalier bound on romantic enterprise; the hardy navigator ambitious of acquiring laurels in these unknown seas; the roving adventurer seeking novelty and excitement; the keen, calculating speculator, eager to profit by the ignorance of savage tribes; and the pale missionary from the cloister anxious to extend the dominion of the Church, or devoutly zealous for the propagation of the Faith. All were full of animation and lively hope. Instead of being regarded by the populace as devoted men bound upon a dark and desperate enterprise, they were contemplated with envy, as favored mortals bound to golden regions and happy climes where nothing but wealth, and wonder, and delights awaited them. Columbus, conspicuous for his height and his commanding appearance, was attended by his two sons, Diego and Fernando, the eldest but a stripling, who had come to witness his departure,* both proud of the glory of their father. Wherever he passed every eye followed him with admiration, and every tongue praised and blessed him. Before sunrise the whole fleet was under

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 44.

way ; the weather was serene and propitious, and as the populace watched their parting sails brightening in the morning beams, they looked forward to their joyful return laden with the treasures of the New World.

According to the instructions of the sovereigns Columbus steered wide of the coasts of Portugal and its islands, standing to the southwest of the Canaries, where he arrived on the 1st of October. After touching at the Grand Canary he anchored on the 5th at Gomera, to take in a supply of wood and water. Here also he purchased calves, goats, and sheep, to stock the island of Hispaniola ; and eight hogs, from which, according to Las Casas, the infinite number of swine was propagated with which the Spanish settlements in the New World subsequently abounded. A number of domestic fowls were likewise purchased, which were the origin of the species in the New World ; and the same might be said of the seeds of oranges, lemons, bergamots, melons, and various orchard fruits* which were thus first introduced into the islands of the west, from the Hesperides or Fortunate Islands of the Old World. †

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 83.

† Humboldt is of the opinion that there were wild oranges, small and bitter, as well as wild lemons, in

On the 7th, when about to sail, Columbus gave to the commander of each vessel a sealed letter of instructions, in which was specified his route to the harbor of Nativity, the residence of the Cacique Guacanagari. This was only to be opened in case of being separated by accident, as he wished to make a mystery as long as possible of the exact route to the newly discovered country, lest adventurers of other nations, and particularly the Portuguese, should follow in his track, and interfere with his enterprises.*

After making sail from Gomera, they were becalmed for a few days among the Canaries, until, on the 13th of October, a fair breeze sprang up from the east, which soon carried them out of sight of the island of Ferro. Columbus held his course to the southwest, intending to keep considerably more to the southward than in his first voyage, in hopes of falling in with the islands of the Caribs, of which he had received such vague and wonderful accounts from the Indians.† Being in the region of the trade-winds the breeze

the New World prior to the discovery. Caldcleugh also mentions that the Brazilians consider the small bitter wild orange of native origin.—Humboldt, *Essai Politique sur l'Isle de Cuba*, tom. i., p. 68.

*Las Casas, M. Sup. †Letter of Dr. Chanca.

continued fair and steady, with a quiet sea and pleasant weather, and by the 24th they had made four hundred and fifty leagues west of Gomera without seeing any of those fields of seaweeds encountered within a much less distance on their first voyage. At that time their appearence was important and almost providential, inspiring continual hope, and enticing them forward in their dubious enterprise. Now they needed no such signals, being full of confidence and lively anticipation, and on seeing a swallow circling about the ships, and being visited occasionally by sudden showers, they began to look out cheerily for land.

Towards the latter part of October they had in the night a gust of heavy rain accompanied by the severe thunder and lightning of the tropics. It lasted for four hours, and they considered themselves in much peril until they beheld several of those lambent flames playing about the tops of the masts and gliding along the rigging, which have always been objects of superstitious fancies among sailors. Fernando Columbus makes remarks on them, strongly characteristic of the age in which he lived:

"On the same Saturday, in the night, was seen St. Elmo with seven lighted tapers, at the topmast: there

was much rain and great thunder; I mean to say, that those lights were seen, which mariners affirm to be the body of St. Elmo, on beholding which they chant litanies and orisons, holding it for certain, that in the tempest in which he appears, no one is in danger. Be that as it may, I leave the matter to them; but if we may believe Pliny, similar lights have sometimes appeared to the Roman mariners during tempests at sea, which they said were Castor and Pollux, of which likewise Seneca makes mention." *

On the evening of Saturday the 2d of November, Columbus was convinced, from the color of the sea, the nature of the waves, and the variable winds and frequent showers, that they must be near to land; he gave orders, therefore, to take in sail, and to maintain a vigilant watch throughout the night. He had judged with his usual sagacity. In the morning a lofty mountain was descried to the west,

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 45. A similar mention is made of this nautical superstition in the voyage of Magellan. "During these great storms, they said that St. Elmo appeared at the topmast with a lighted candle, and sometimes with two, upon which the people shed tears of joy, receiving great consolation, and saluted him according to the custom of mariners. He remained visible for a quarter of an hour, and then disappeared, with a great flash of lightning, which blinded the people."—Herrera, decad. ii., lib. iv., cap. 10.

at the sight of which there were shouts of joy throughout the fleet. Columbus gave to the island the name of Dominica, from having discovered it on Sunday. As the ships moved gently onward, other islands rose to sight, covered with forests, while flights of parrots and other tropical birds passed from one to the other.

The crews were now assembled on the decks of the several ships, to return thanks to God for their prosperous voyage, and their happy discovery of land, chanting the *Salve Regina* and other anthems. Such was the solemn manner in which Columbus celebrated all his discoveries, and which, in fact, was generally observed by the Spanish and Portuguese voyagers.

Chapter III.

TRANSACTIONS AT THE ISLAND OF GUADALOUPE.

[1493.]

THE islands among which Columbus had arrived, were a part of that beautiful cluster called by some the Antilles, which sweep almost in a semicircle from the eastern end of Porto Rico to the coast of Paria on the southern continent, forming a kind of barrier between the main ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

During the first day that he entered this archipelago, Columbus saw no less than six islands of different magnitude. They were clothed in tropical vegetation, and the breezes from them were sweetened by the fragrance of their forests.

After seeking in vain for good anchorage at Dominica, he stood for another of the group, to which he gave the name of his ship,

Marigalante. Here he landed, displayed the royal banner, and took possession of the archipelago in the name of his sovereigns. The island appeared to be uninhabited; a rich and dense forest overspread it; some of the trees were in blossom, others laden with unknown fruits, others possessing spicy odors—among which was one with the leaf of the laurel and the fragrance of the clove.

Hence they made sail for an island of larger size, with a remarkable mountain; one peak, which proved afterwards to be the crater of a volcano, rose to a great height, with streams of water gushing from it. As they approached within three leagues, they beheld a cataract of such height, that, to use the words of the narrator, it seemed to be falling from the sky. As it broke into foam in its descent, many at first believed it to be merely a stratum of white rock.* To this island, which was called by the Indians Turuqueira,† the Admiral gave the name of Guadaloupe, having promised the monks of our Lady of Guadaloupe in Estremadura, to call some newly discovered place after their convent.

Landing here on the 4th, they visited a

* Letter of Dr. Chanca.

† *Idem.* Peter Martyr calls it Carucueira, or Queraquiera; decad. i., lib. ii.

village near the shore, the inhabitants of which fled, some even leaving their children behind in their terror and confusion. These the Spaniards soothed with caresses, binding hawks'-bells and other trinkets round their arms. This village, like most of those of the island, consisted of twenty or thirty houses, built round a public place or square. The houses were constructed of trunks of trees interwoven with reeds and branches, and thatched with palm leaves. They were square, not circular, like those of the other islands,* and each had its portico or shelter from the sun. One of the porticos was decorated with images of serpents tolerably carved in wood. For furniture they had hammocks of cotton net, and utensils formed of calabashes or earthenware, equal to the best of those of Hispaniola. There were large quantities of cotton ; some in the wool, some in yarn, and some wrought into cloth of very tolerable texture ; and many bows and arrows, the latter tipped with sharp bones. Provisions seemed to abound. There were many domesticated geese, like those of Europe, and parrots as large as household fowls, with blue, green, white, and scarlet plumage, being the splendid species called *guacamayos*. Here also the Spaniards first met with the *anana*, or

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 62.

pineapple, the flavor and fragrance of which astonished and delighted them. In one of the houses they were surprised to find a pan or other utensil of iron, not having ever met with that metal in the New World. Fernando Colon supposes that it was formed of a certain kind of heavy stone found among those islands, which, when burnt, has the appearance of shining iron; or it might have been some utensil brought by the Indians from Hispaniola. Certain it is, that no native iron was ever found among the people of these islands.

In another house was the stern-post of a vessel. How had it reached these shores, which appeared never to have been visited by the ships of civilized man? Was is the wreck of some vessel from the more enlightened countries of Asia, which they supposed to lie somewhere in this direction? Or a part of the caravel which Columbus had lost at the island of Hispaniola during his first voyage? Or a fragment of some European ship which had drifted across the Atlantic? The latter was most probably the case. The constant current which sets over from the coast of Africa, produced by the stately prevalence of the trade-winds, must occasionally bring wrecks from the Old World to the New; and long before the discovery of Columbus, the savages

of the islands and the coasts may have gazed with wonder at fragments of European barks which have floated to their shores.

What struck the Spaniards with horror was the sight of human bones, vestiges, as they supposed, of unnatural repasts; and skulls, apparently used as vases and other household utensils. These dismal objects convinced them that they were now in the abodes of the Cannibals, or Caribs, whose predatory expeditions and ruthless character rendered them the terror of these seas.

The boat having returned on board, Columbus proceeded upwards of two leagues, until he anchored late in the evening in a convenient port. The island on this side extended for the distance of five-and-twenty leagues, diversified with lofty mountains and broad plains. Along the coast were small villages and hamlets, the inhabitants of which fled in affright. On the following day the boats landed, and succeeded in taking and bringing off a boy and several women. The information gathered from them confirmed Columbus in his idea that this was one of the islands of the Caribs. He learnt that the inhabitants were in league with two neighboring islands, but made war upon all the rest. They even went on predatory enterprises, in canoes made from the hollowed

trunks of trees, to the distance of one hundred and fifty leagues. Their arms were bows and arrows pointed with the bones of fishes, or shells of tortoises, and poisoned with the juice of a certain herb. They made descents upon the islands, ravaged the villages, carried off the youngest and handsomest of the women, whom they retained as servants or companions, and made prisoners of the men, to be killed and eaten.

After hearing such accounts of the natives of this island, Columbus was extremely uneasy at finding in the evening that Diego Marque, a captain of one of the caravels, and eight men were missing. They had landed early in the morning without leave, and straying into the woods had not since been seen or heard of. The night passed away without their return. On the following day parties were sent in various directions in quest of them, each with a trumpeter to sound calls and signals. Guns were fired from the ships, and arquebuses on shore, but all to no purpose, and the parties returned in the evening, wearied with a fruitless search. In several hamlets, they had met with proofs of the cannibal propensities of the natives. Human limbs were suspended to the beams of the houses, as if curing for provisions; the head of a young man recently

killed, was yet bleeding; some parts of his body were roasting before the fire, others boiling with the flesh of geese and parrots.*

Several of the natives, in the course of the day, had been seen on the shore gazing with wonder at the ships, but when the boats approached they fled to the woods and mountains. Several women came off to the Spaniards for refuge, being captives from other islands. Columbus ordered that they should be decorated with hawks'-bells and strings of beads and bugles and sent on shore, in hopes of enticing off some of the men. They soon returned to the boats stripped of their ornaments, and imploring to be taken on board the ships. The Admiral learnt from them that most of the men of the island were absent, the king having sailed some time before with ten canoes and three hundred warriors on a cruise in quest of prisoners and booty. When the men went forth on these expeditions the women remained to defend their shores from invasion. They were expert archers, partaking of the warrior spirit of their husbands, and almost equalling them in force and intrepidity.†

The continued absence of the wanderers

* P. Martyr, Letter 147, to Pomponius Lætus. *Idem.*, decad. i., lib. ii.

† *Idem.*, decad. iii., lib. ix.

perplexed Columbus extremely. He was impatient to arrive at Hispaniola, but unwilling to sail while there was a possibility of their being alive and being recovered. In this emergency Alonso de Ojeda, the same young cavalier whose exploit on the tower of the cathedral at Seville has been mentioned, volunteered to scour the island with forty men in quest of them. He departed accordingly, and during his absence the ships took in wood and water, and part of the crews were permitted to land, wash their clothes, and recreate themselves.

Ojeda and his followers pushed far into the interior, firing off arquebuses and sounding trumpets in the valleys and from the summits of cliffs and precipices, but were only answered by their own echoes. The tropical luxuriance and density of the forests rendered them almost impenetrable; and it was necessary to wade a great many rivers, or probably the windings and doublings of the same stream. The island appeared to be naturally fertile in the extreme. The forests abounded with aromatic trees and shrubs, among which Ojeda fancied he perceived the odor of precious gums and spices. There was honey in hollow trees and in the clefts of rocks; abundance of fruit also; for, according to Peter Martyr, the Caribs, in their

predatory cruisings, were accustomed to bring home the seeds and roots of all kinds of plants from the distant islands and countries which they overran.

Ojeda returned without any tidings of the stragglers. Several days had now elapsed since their disappearance. They were given up for lost, and the fleet was about sailing when to the universal joy a signal was made by them from the shore. When they came on board their haggard and exhausted looks bespoke what they had suffered. For several days they had been perplexed in trackless forests so dense as almost to exclude the light of day. They had clambered rocks, waded rivers, and struggled through briers and thickets. Some who were experienced seamen climbed the trees, to get a sight of the stars, by which to govern their course; but the spreading branches and thick foliage shut out all view of the heavens. They were harassed with the fear that the Admiral, thinking them dead, might set sail and leave them in this wilderness, cut off forever from their homes and the abodes of civilized man. At length when almost reduced to despair, they had arrived at the sea-shore, and following it for some time, beheld to their great joy the fleet riding quietly at anchor. They brought with

them several Indian women and boys, but in all their wanderings they had not met with any man,—the greater part of the warriors, as has been said, being fortunately absent on an expedition.

Notwithstanding the hardships they had endured and his joy at their return, Columbus put the captain under arrest, and stopped part of the rations of the men, for having strayed away without permission; for in a service of such a critical nature it was necessary to punish every breach of discipline.*

* Dr. Chanca's Letter. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 46.

Chapter III.

CRUISE AMONG THE CARIBBEE ISLANDS.

[1493.]

WEIGHING anchor on the 10th of November, Columbus steered to the northwest, along this beautiful archipelago, giving names to the islands as they rose in view; such as Montserrat, Santa Maria la Redonda, Santa Maria la Antigua, and San Martin. Various other islands, lofty and well wooded, appeared to the north, southwest, and southeast; but he forebore to visit them. The weather proving boisterous, he anchored on the 14th at an island called Ayay by the Indians, but to which he gave the name of Santa Cruz. A boat well manned was sent on shore to get water and procure information. They found a village deserted by the men, but secured a few women and boys, most of them captives from other islands. They soon had an instance of Carib

courage and ferocity. While at the village they beheld a canoe from the distant part of the island come round a point of land and arrive in view of the ships. The Indians in the canoe, two of whom were females, remained gazing in mute amazement at the ships, and were so entranced that the boat stole close upon them before they perceived it. Seizing their paddles they attempted to escape, but the boat being between them and the land, cut off their retreat. They now caught up their bows and arrows, and plied them with amazing vigor and rapidity. The Spaniards covered themselves with their bucklers, but two of them were quickly wounded. The women fought as fiercely as the men, and one of them sent an arrow with such force that it passed through and through a buckler.

The Spaniards now ran their boat against the canoe, and overturned it. Some of the savages got upon sunken rocks, others discharged their arrows while swimming, as dexterously as though they had been upon firm land. It was with the utmost difficulty they could be overcome and taken; one of them who had been transfixed with a lance, died soon after being brought aboard the ships. One of the women, from the obedience and deference paid to her, appeared to be their

queen. She was accompanied by her son, a young man strongly made, with a frowning brow and lion's face. He had been wounded in the conflict. The hair of these savages was long and coarse, their eyes were encircled with paint, so as to give them a hideous expression; and bands of cotton were firmly bound above and below the muscular parts of the arms and legs, so as to cause them to swell to a disproportioned size—a custom prevalent among various tribes of the New World. Though captives in chains, and in the power of their enemies, they still retained a frowning brow and an air of defiance. Peter Martyr, who often went to see them in Spain, declares, from his own experience and that of others who accompanied him, that it was impossible to look at them without a sensation of horror, so menacing and terrible was their aspect. The sensation was doubtless caused in a great measure by the idea of their being cannibals. In this skirmish, according to the same writer, the Indians used poisoned arrows; and one of the Spaniards died within a few days, of a wound received from one of the females.*

Pursuing his voyage, Columbus soon came

* P. Martyr, decad. i., lib. ii. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 47. Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, cap. 85. Letter of Dr. Chanca.

in sight of a great cluster of islands, some verdant and covered with forests, but the greater part naked and sterile, rising into craggy mountains; with rocks of a bright azure color and some of a glistening white. These, with his usual vivacity of imagination, he supposed to contain mines of rich metals and precious stones. The islands lying close together, with the sea beating roughly in the narrow channels which divided them, rendered it dangerous to enter among them with the large ships. Columbus sent in a small caravel with lateen sails, to reconnoitre, which returned with the report that there were upwards of fifty islands, apparently inhabited. To the largest of this group he gave the name of Santa Ursula, and called the others the Eleven Thousand Virgins.*

Continuing his course, he arrived one evening in sight of a great island covered with beautiful forests, and indented with fine havens. It was called by the natives Boriquen, but he gave it the name of San Juan Bautista; —it is the same since known by the name of Porto Rico. This was the native island of most of the captives who had fled to the ships for refuge from the Caribs. According to

* P. Martyr, decad. i., lib. ii. Letter of Dr. Chanca.

their accounts it was fertile and populous, and under the dominion of a single cacique. Its inhabitants are not given to rove, and possessed but few canoes. They were subject to frequent invasions from the Caribs, who were their implacable enemies. They had become warriors, therefore, in their own defence, using the bow and arrow and the war club; and in their contests with their cannibal foes they retorted upon them their own atrocities, devouring their prisoners in revenge.

After running for a whole day along the beautiful coast of this island, they anchored in a bay at the west end abounding in fish. On landing they found an Indian village, constructed as usual round a common square, like a market-place, with one large and well-built house. A spacious road led thence to the seaside, having fences on each side of interwoven weeds, enclosing fruitful gardens. At the end of the road was a kind of terrace, or lookout, constructed of reeds and overhanging the water. The whole place had an air of neatness and ingenuity superior to the ordinary residences of the natives, and appeared to be the abode of some important chieftain. All, however, was silent and deserted. Not a human being was to be seen during the time they remained at the place. The natives had

concealed themselves at the sight of the squadron. After remaining here two days Columbus made sail, and stood for the island of Hispaniola. Thus ended his cruise among the Caribbee islands, the account of whose fierce and savage people was received with eager curiosity by the learned of Europe, and considered as settling one dark and doubtful question to the disadvantage of human nature. Peter Martyr, in his letter to Pomponius Lætus, announces the fact with fearful solemnity: "The stories of the Lestrigonians and of Polyphemus, who fed on human flesh, are no longer doubtful! Attend, but beware, lest thy hair bristle with horror!"

That many of the pictures given us of this extraordinary race of people have been colored by the fears of the Indians and the prejudices of the Spaniards, is highly probable. They were constantly the terror of the former, and the brave and obstinate opponents of the latter. The evidences adduced of their cannibal propensities must be received with large allowances for the careless and inaccurate observations of seafaring men, and the preconceived belief of the fact, which existed in the minds of the Spaniards. It was a custom among the natives of many of the islands, and of other parts of the New World, to preserve the re-

mains of their deceased relatives and friends,—sometimes the entire body; sometimes only the head, or some of the limbs, dried at the fire; sometimes the mere bones. These, when found in the dwellings of the natives of Hispaniola, against whom no prejudice of the kind existed, were correctly regarded as relics of the deceased, preserved through affection or reverence; but any remains of the kind found among the Caribs, were looked upon with horror as proof of cannibalism.

The warlike and unyielding character of these people, so different from that of the pusillanimous nations around them, and the wide scope of their enterprises and wanderings, like those of the nomad tribes of the Old World, entitle them to distinguished attention. They were trained to war from their infancy. As soon as they could walk their intrepid mothers put in their hands the bow and arrow, and prepared them to take an early part in the hardy enterprises of their fathers. Their distant roamings by sea made them observant and intelligent. The natives of the other islands only knew how to divide time by day and night, by the sun and moon, whereas these had acquired some knowledge of the stars, by which to calculate the times and seasons.*

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 62.

The traditional accounts of their origin, though of course extremely vague, are yet capable of being verified to a great degree by geographical facts, and open one of the rich veins of curious inquiry and speculation which abound in the New World. They are said to have migrated from the remote valleys embosomed in the Appalachian mountains. The earliest accounts we have of them represent them with weapons in their hands, continually engaged in wars, winning their way and shifting their abode, until, in the course of time, they found themselves at the extremity of Florida. Here, abandoning the northern continent they passed over to the Lucayos, and thence gradually, in the process of years, from island to island of that vast and verdant chain which links, as it were, the end of Florida to the coast of Paria on the southern continent. The archipelago extending from Porto Rico to Tobago was their stronghold, and the island of Guadaloupe in a manner their citadel. Hence they made their expeditions, and spread the terror of their name through all the surrounding countries. Swarms of them landed upon the southern continent and overran some parts of *terra firma*. Traces of them have been discovered far in the interior of that vast country through which flows the Oroo-

noko. The Dutch found colonies of them on the banks of the Ikouteka, which empties into the Surinam ; along the Esquibi, the Maroni, and other rivers of Guayana ; and in the country watered by the windings of the Cayenne ; and it would appear that they extended their wanderings to the shores of the Southern Ocean, where, among the aboriginals of Brazil, were some who called themselves Caribs, distinguished from the surrounding Indians by their superior hardihood, subtlety, and enterprise.*

To trace the footsteps of this roving tribe throughout its wide migrations from the Appalachian mountains of the northern continent, along the clusters of islands which stud the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, to the shores of Paria, and so across the vast regions of Guayana and Amazonia to the remote coast of Brazil, would be one of the most curious researches in aboriginal history, and throw much light upon the mysterious question of the population of the New World.

* Rochefort, *Hist. Nat. des Iles Antilles ;* Rotterdam, 1665.

Chapter IV.

ARRIVAL AT THE HARBOR OF LA NAVIDAD—DISASTER OF THE FORTRESS.

[1493.]

ON the 22d of November the fleet arrived off what was soon ascertained to be the eastern extremity of Hayti or, as the Admiral had named it, Hispaniola. The greatest excitement prevailed throughout the *armada* at the thoughts of soon arriving at the end of their voyage. Those who had been here on the preceding voyage remembered the pleasant days they had passed among the groves of Hayti; and the rest looked forward with eagerness to scenes painted to them with the captivating illusions of the golden age.

As the fleet swept with easy sail along the green shore a boat was sent to land to bury a Biscayan sailor who had died of the wound of

an arrow received in the late skirmish. Two light caravels hovered near the shore to guard the boat's crew while the funeral ceremony was performed near the beach, under the trees. Several natives came off to the ship, with a message to the Admiral from the cacique of the neighborhood inviting him to land, and promising great quantities of gold; anxious, however, to arrive at La Navidad Columbus dismissed them with presents, and continued his course. Arriving at the gulf of Las Flechas or, as it is now called, the gulf of Samana, the place where in his preceding voyage a skirmish had occurred with the natives, he set on shore one of the Indians of the place, who had accompanied him to Spain, and had been converted to Christianity. He dismissed him finely apparelled and loaded with trinkets, anticipating favorable effects from his accounts to his countrymen of the wonders he had seen and the kind treatment he had experienced. The young Indian made many fair promises, but either forgot them all on regaining his liberty and his native mountains, or fell a victim to envy caused by his wealth and finery. Nothing was seen or heard of him more.* Only one Indian of those who had been to Spain now remained in the fleet—a young Lu-

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii. cap. 9.

cayan, native of the island of Guanahani, who had been baptized at Barcelona, and who had been named after the Admiral's brother, Diego Colon. He continued always faithful and devoted to the Spaniards.

On the 25th Columbus anchored in the harbor of Monte Christi, anxious to fix upon a place for a settlement in the neighborhood of the stream to which in his first voyage he had given the name of the Rio del Oro, or the Golden River. As several of the mariners were ranging the coast, they found on the green and moist banks of a rivulet the bodies of a man and a boy; the former with a cord of Spanish grass about his neck, and his arms extended and tied by the wrists to a stake in the form of a cross. The bodies were in such a state of decay that it was impossible to ascertain whether they were Indians or Europeans. Sinister doubts, however, were entertained, which were confirmed on the following day; for on revisiting the shore they found, at some distance from the former, two other bodies, one of which, having a beard, was evidently the corpse of a white man.

The pleasant anticipations of Columbus on his approach to La Navidad were now overcast with gloomy forebodings. The experience recently had of the ferocity of some of the in-

habitants of these islands, made him doubtful of the amity of others, and he began to fear that some misfortune might have befallen Arana and his garrison.

The frank and fearless manner, however, in which a number of the natives came off to the ships, and their unembarrassed demeanor in some measure allayed his suspicions; for it did not appear probable that they would venture thus confidently among the white men, with the consciousness of having recently shed the blood of their companions.

On the evening of the 27th he arrived opposite the harbor of La Navidad, and cast anchor about a league from the land, not daring to enter in the dark, on account of the dangerous reefs. It was too late to distinguish objects. Impatient to satisfy his doubts, therefore, he ordered two cannon to be fired. The report echoed along the shore, but there was no reply from the fort. Every eye was now directed to catch the gleam of some signal light; every ear listened to hear some friendly shout; but there was neither light nor shout, nor any other sign of life. All was darkness and deathlike silence.*

Several hours were passed in dismal sus-

* Letter of Dr. Chanca. Navarrete, *Colec. de Viage*, tom. i.

pense, and every one longed for the morning light, to put an end to his uncertainty. About midnight a canoe approached the fleet; when within a certain distance, it paused, and the Indians who were in it, hailing one of the vessels, asked for the Admiral. When directed to his ship, they drew near, but would not venture on board until they saw Columbus. He showed himself at the side of his vessel, and a light being held up, his countenance and commanding person were not to be mistaken. They now entered the ship without hesitation. One of them was a cousin of the Cacique Guacanagari, and brought a present from him of two masks ornamented with gold. Columbus inquired about the Spaniards who had remained on the island. The information which the native gave was somewhat confused, or perhaps was imperfectly understood, as the only Indian interpreter on board was the young Lucayan, Diego Colon, whose native language was different from that of Hayti. He told Columbus that several of the Spaniards had died of sickness, others had fallen into a quarrel among themselves, and others had removed to a different part of the island, where they had taken to themselves Indian wives. That Guacanagari had been assailed by Caonabo, the fierce cacique of the golden mountains of Ci-

bao, who had wounded him in battle, and burnt his village; and that he remained ill of his wound in a neighboring hamlet, or he would have hastened in person to welcome the Admiral.*

Melancholy as were these tidings, they relieved Columbus from a dark and dismal surmise. Whatever disasters had overwhelmed his garrison, it had not fallen a sacrifice to the perfidy of the natives. His good opinion of the gentleness and kindness of these people had not been misplaced; nor had their cacique forfeited the admiration inspired by his benevolent hospitality. Thus the most corroding care was dismissed from his mind; for to a generous spirit, there is nothing so disheartening as to discover treachery where it has reposed confidence and friendship. It would seem also that some of the garrison were yet alive, though scattered about the island; they would doubtless soon hear of his arrival, and would hasten to rejoin them, well qualified to give information of the interior.

Satisfied of the friendly disposition of the natives, the cheerfulness of the crews was in a great measure restored. The Indians who had come on board were well entertained, and

* Dr. Chanca's Letter, *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 48. Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. i., cap. 9.

departed in the night gratified with various presents, promising to return in the morning with the Cacique Guacanagari. The mariners now awaited the dawn of day with reassured spirits, expecting that the cordial intercourse and pleasant scenes of the first voyage would be renewed.

The morning dawned and passed away, and the day advanced and began to decline, without the promised visit from the Cacique. Some apprehensions were now entertained that the Indians who had visited them the preceding night might be drowned, as they had partaken freely of wine, and their small canoe was easy to be overset. There was a silence and an air of desertion about the whole neighborhood extremely suspicious. On their preceding visit the harbor had been a scene of continual animation; canoes gliding over the clear waters, Indians in groups on the shores, or under the trees, or swimming off to the caravel. Now, not a canoe was to be seen, not an Indian hailed them from the land; nor was there any smoke rising from among the groves to give a sign of habitation.

After waiting for a long time in vain Columbus sent a boat to the shore to reconnoitre. On landing, the crew hastened and sought the fortress. It was a ruin; the palisadoes were

beaten down, and the whole presented the appearance of having been sacked, burnt, and destroyed. Here and there broken chests, spoiled provisions, and the ragged remains of European garments. Not an Indian approached them. They caught sight of two or three lurking at a distance among the trees and apparently watching them, but they vanished into the woods on finding themselves observed. Meeting no one to explain the melancholy scene before them, they returned with dejected hearts to the ships and related to the Admiral what they had seen.

Columbus was greatly troubled in mind at this intelligence, and the fleet having now anchored in the harbor, he went himself to shore on the following morning. Repairing to the ruins of the fortress he found everything as it had been described, and searched in vain for the remains of dead bodies. No traces of the garrison were to be seen, but broken utensils and torn vestments were scattered here and there among the grass. There were many surmises and conjectures. If the fortress had been sacked some of the garrison might yet survive, and might either have fled from the neighborhood or been carried into captivity. Cannon and arquebuses were discharged, in hopes if any of the survivors were

hid among rocks and thickets, they might hear them and come forth; but no one made his appearance. A mournful and lifeless silence reigned over the place. The suspicion of treachery on the part of Guacanagari was again revived, but Columbus was unwilling to indulge it. On looking further, the village of that cacique was found a mere heap of burnt ruins, which showed that he had been involved in the disaster of the garrison.

Columbus had left orders with Arana and the officers to bury all the treasure they might procure, or in case of sudden danger to throw it into the well of the fortress. He ordered excavations to be made therefore among the ruins, and the well to be cleared out. While this search was making he proceeded with the boats to explore the neighborhood, partly in hopes of gaining intelligence of any scattered survivors of the garrison, and partly to look out for a better situation for a fortress. After proceeding about a league he came to a hamlet, the inhabitants of which had fled, taking whatever they could with them and hiding the rest in the grass. In the houses were European articles which evidently had not been procured by barter, such as stockings, pieces of cloth, and an anchor of the caravel which had been wrecked, and a beautiful

Moorish robe, folded in the form in which it had been brought from Spain.*

Having passed some time contemplating these scattered documents of a disastrous story Columbus returned to the ruins of the fortress. The excavations and search in the well had proved fruitless; no treasure was to be found. Not far from the fort, however, they had discovered the bodies of eleven men buried in different places, and which were known by their clothing to be Europeans. They had evidently been for some time in the ground, the grass having grown upon their graves.

In the course of the day a number of Indians made their appearance, hovering timidly at a distance. Their apprehensions were gradually dispelled until they became perfectly communicative. Some of them could speak a few words of Spanish, and knew the names of all the men who had remained with Arana. By this means, and by the aid of the interpreter, the story of the garrison was in some measure ascertained.

It is curious to note this first footprint of civilization in the New World. Those whom Columbus had left behind, says Oviedo, with the exception of the commander Don Diego

* Letter of Dr. Chanca. Cura de los Palacios, cap. 120.

Arana and one or two others, were but little calculated to follow the precepts of so prudent a person, or to discharge the critical duties enjoined upon them. They were principally men of the lowest order, or mariners who knew not how to conduct themselves with restraint or sobriety on shore.* No sooner had the Admiral departed, than all his counsels and commands died away from their minds. Though a mere handful of men surrounded by savage tribes, and dependent upon their own prudence and good conduct, and upon the good-will of the natives, for their very existence, yet they soon began to indulge in the most wanton abuses. Some were prompted by rapacious avarice, and sought to possess themselves, by all kinds of wrongful means, of the golden ornaments and other valuable property of the natives. Others were grossly sensual, and not content with two or three wives allotted to each by Guacanagari, seduced the wives and daughters of the Indians.

Fierce brawls ensued among them about their ill-gotten spoils and the favors of the Indian women, and the natives beheld with astonishment the beings whom they had worshipped, as descended from the skies, abandoned to the grossest of earthly passions, and

* Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. ii., cap. 12.

raging against each other with worse than brutal ferocity.

Still these dissensions might not have been very dangerous, had they observed one of the injunctions of Columbus and kept together in the fortress, maintaining military vigilance; but all precaution of the kind was soon forgotten. In vain did Don Diego de Arana interpose his authority; in vain did every inducement present itself which could bind man and man together in a foreign land. All order, all subordination, all unanimity was at an end. Many abandoned the fortress, and lived carelessly and at random about the neighborhood; every one was for himself, or associated with some little knot of confederates to injure and despoil the rest. Thus factions broke out among them, until ambition arose to complete the destruction of their mimic empire. Pedro Gutierrez and Rodrigo de Escobedo, whom Columbus had left as lieutenants to the commander, to succeed to him in case of accident, took advantage of these disorders and aspired to an equal share in the authority, if not to the supreme control.* Violent affrays succeeded, in which a Spaniard named Jacomo was killed. Having failed in their object, Gutierrez and Escobedo

* Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. ii., cap. 12.

withdrew from the fortress with nine of their adherents, and a number of their women ; and turned their thoughts on distant enterprise. Having heard marvellous accounts of the mines of Cibao, and the golden sands of its mountain rivers, they set off for that district, flushed with the thoughts of amassing immense treasure. Thus they disregarded another strong injunction of Columbus, which was to keep within the friendly territories of Guacanagari. The region to which they repaired was in the interior of the island, within the province of Maguana, ruled by the famous Caonabo, called by the Spaniards the Lord of the Golden House. This renowned chieftain was a Carib by birth, and possessed the fierceness and enterprise of his nation. He had come an adventurer to Hispaniola, and by his courage and address and his warlike exploits, had made himself the most potent of its caciques. The inhabitants universally stood in awe of him from his Carib origin, and he was the hero of the island when the ships of the white men suddenly appeared upon its shores. The wonderful accounts of their power and prowess had reached him among his mountains, and he had the shrewdness to perceive that his consequence must decline before such formidable intruders. The departure of Columbus

gave him hopes that their intrusion would be but temporary. The discords and excesses of those who remained, while they moved his detestation, inspired him with increasing confidence. No sooner did Gutierrez and Escobedo, with their companions, take refuge in his dominions than he put them to death. He then formed a league with the cacique of Marien, whose territories adjoined those of Guacanagari on the west, and concerted a sudden attack upon the fortress. Emerging with his warriors from among the mountains and traversing great tracts of forests with profound secrecy, he arrived in the vicinity of the village without being discovered. The Spaniards, confiding in the gentle and pacific nature of the Indians, had neglected all military precautions. But ten men remained in the fortress with Arana, and these do not appear to have maintained any guard. The rest were quartered in houses in the neighborhood. In the dead of night, when all were wrapped in sleep, Caonabo and his warriors burst upon the place with frightful yells, got possession of the fortress before the inmates could put themselves upon their defence, and surrounded and set fire to the houses in which the rest of the white men were sleeping. Eight of the Spaniards fled to the seaside, pursued by the

savages, and rushing into the waves were drowned; the rest were massacred. Guacanagari and his subjects fought faithfully in defence of their guests, but not being of a warlike character, were easily routed. The Cacique was wounded by the hand of Caonabo, and his village was burnt to the ground.*

Such was the history of the first European establishment in the New World. It presents in a diminutive compass an epitome of the gross vices which degrade civilization, and the grand political errors which sometimes subvert the mightiest empires. All law and order being relaxed by corruption and licentiousness, public good was sacrificed to private interest and passion, the community was convulsed by divers factions and dissensions, until the whole was shaken asunder by two aspiring demagogues, ambitious of the command of a petty fortress in a wilderness and the supreme control of eight-and-thirty men.

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 9. Letter of Dr. Chanca, Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. ii. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 49. Cura de los Palacios, cap. 120, MS. Muñoz, *Hist. N. Mundo*, lib. iv.

Chapter V.

TRANSACTIONS WITH THE NATIVES—SUSPICIOUS CONDUCT OF GUACANAGARI.

[1493.]

THE tragical story of the fortress, as gathered from the Indians at the harbor, received confirmation from another quarter. One of the captains, Melchor Maldonado, coasting to the east with his caravel in search of some more favorable situation for a settlement, was boarded by a canoe in which were two Indians. One of them was the brother of Guacanagari, who entreated him, in the name of the Cacique, to visit him at the village where he lay ill of his wound. Maldonado immediately went on shore with two or three of his companions. They found Guacanagari confined by lameness to his hammock, surrounded by seven of his wives. The Cacique expressed great regret at not being able to visit the Admiral. He related various particulars

concerning the disasters of the garrison, and the part which he and his subjects had taken in its defence, showing his wounded leg bound up. His story agreed with that already related. After treating the Spaniards with his accustomed hospitality, he presented to each of them at parting a golden ornament.

On the following morning Columbus repaired in person to visit the Cacique. To impress him with an idea of his present power and importance, he appeared with a numerous train of officers, all richly dressed or in glittering armor. They found Guacanagari reclining in a hammock of cotton net. He exhibited great emotion on beholding the Admiral, and immediately adverted to the death of the Spaniards. As he related the disasters of the garrison he shed many tears, but dwelt particularly on the part he had taken in the defence of his guests, pointing out several of his subjects present who had received wounds in the battle. It was evident from the scars that the wounds had been received from Indian weapons.

Columbus was readily satisfied of the good faith of Guacanagari. When he reflected on the many proofs of an open and generous nature, which he had given at the time of his shipwreck, he could not believe him capable of so dark an act of perfidy. An exchange of

presents now took place. The Cacique gave him eight hundred beads of a certain stone called *ciba*, which they considered highly precious, and one hundred of gold, a golden coronet, and three small calabashes filled with gold dust, and thought himself outdone in munificence when presented with a number of glass beads, hawks'-bells, knives, pins, needles, small mirrors, and ornaments of copper, which metal he seemed to prefer to gold.*

Guacanagari's leg had been violently bruised by a stone. At the request of Columbus he permitted it to be examined by a surgeon who was present. On removing the bandage no signs of a wound were to be seen, although he shrank with pain whenever the limb was handled.† As some time had elapsed since the battle, the external bruise might have disappeared, while a tenderness remained in the part. Several present, however, who had not been in the first voyage, and had witnessed nothing of the generous conduct of the Cacique, looked upon his lameness as feigned, and the whole story of the battle a fabrication, to conceal his real perfidy. Father Boyle especially, who was of a vindictive spirit, advised the Admiral to make an immediate example of the

* Letter of Dr. Chanca. Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom. i.

† Letter of Dr. Chanca. Cura de los Palacios, cap. 120.

chieftain. Columbus, however, viewed the matter in a different light. Whatever prepossessions he might have were in favor of the Cacique; his heart refused to believe in his criminality. Though conscious of innocence, Guacanagari might have feared the suspicions of the white men, and have exaggerated the effects of his wound; but the wounds of his subjects made by Indian weapons, and the destruction of his village, were strong proofs to Columbus of the truth of his story. To satisfy his more suspicious followers, and to pacify the friar without gratifying his love for persecution, he observed that true policy dictated amicable conduct towards Guacanagari, at least until his guilt was fully ascertained. They had too great a force at present to apprehend anything from his hostility, but violent measures in this early stage of their intercourse with the natives might spread a general panic, and impede all their operations on the island. Most of his officers concurred in this opinion; so it was determined, notwithstanding the inquisitorial suggestions of the friar, to take the story of the Indians for current truth, and to continue to treat them with friendship.

At the invitation of Columbus the Cacique, though still apparently in pain from his wound,*

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 89.

accompanied him to the ships that very evening. He had wondered at the power and grandeur of the white men when they visited his shores with two small caravels; his wonder was infinitely increased on beholding a fleet riding at anchor in the harbor, and on going on board of the Admiral's ship, which was a vessel of heavy burden. Here he beheld the Carib prisoners. So great was the dread of them among the timid inhabitants of Hayti that they contemplated them with fear and shuddering, even though in chains.* That the Admiral had dared to invade these terrible beings in their very island, and had dragged them as it were from their strongholds, was perhaps one of the greatest proofs to the Indians of the irresistible prowess of the white men.

Columbus took the Cacique through the ship. The various works of art, the plants and fruits of the Old World, domestic fowls of different kinds, cattle, sheep, swine, and other animals brought to stock the island, all were wonders to him. But what most struck him with amazement was the horses. He had never seen any but the most diminutive quadrupeds, and was astonished at their size, their great strength, terrific appearance, yet perfect docil-

* Peter Martyr, letter 153 to Pomponius Lætus.

ity.* He looked upon all these extraordinary objects as so many wonders brought from heaven, which he still believed to be the native home of the white men.

On board of the ship were ten of the women delivered from Carib captivity. They were chiefly natives of the island of Boriquen, or Porto Rico. These soon attracted the notice of the Cacique, who is represented to have been of an amorous complexion. He entered into conversation with them; for though the islanders spoke different languages, or rather, as is more probable, different dialects of the same language they were able, in general, to understand each other. Among these women was one distinguished above her companions by a certain loftiness of air and manner; she had been much noticed and admired by the Spaniards, who had given her the name of Catalina. The Cacique spoke to her repeatedly with great gentleness of tone and manner, pity in all probability being mingled with his admiration; for though rescued from the hands of the Caribs, she and her companions were in a manner captives on board of the ship.

A collation was now spread before the chief-

* *Hist. del Almirante, ubi sup.* Letter of Dr. Chanca.

tain, and Columbus endeavored in every way to revive their former cordial intercourse. He treated his guest with every manifestation of perfect confidence, and talked of coming to live with him in his present residence, and of building houses in the vicinity. The Cacique expressed much satisfaction at the idea, but observed that the situation of the place was unhealthy, which was indeed the case. Notwithstanding every demonstration of friendship, however, the Cacique was evidently ill at ease. The charm of mutual confidence was broken. It was evident that the gross licentiousness of the garrison had greatly impaired the veneration of the Indians for their heaven-born visitors. Even the reverence for the symbols of the Christian faith, which Columbus endeavored to inculcate, was frustrated by the profligacy of its votaries. Though fond of ornaments, it was with the greatest difficulty the Cacique could be prevailed upon by the Admiral to suspend an image of the Virgin about his neck, when he understood it to be an object of Christian adoration.*

The suspicions of the chieftain's guilt gained ground with many of the Spaniards. Father Boyle, in particular, regarded him with an evil eye, and privately advised the Admiral,

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 49.

now that he had him on board, to detain him prisoner; but Columbus rejected the counsel of the crafty friar, as contrary to sound policy and honorable faith. It is difficult, however, to conceal lurking ill-will. The Cacique accustomed in his former intercourse with the Spaniards to meet with faces beaming with gratitude and friendship, could not but perceive their altered looks. Notwithstanding the frank and cordial hospitality of the Admiral, therefore, he soon begged permission to return to land.*

The next morning there was a mysterious movement among the natives on shore. A messenger from the Cacique inquired of the Admiral how long he intended to remain at the harbor, and was informed that he should sail on the following day. In the evening the brother of Guacanagari came on board, under pretext of bartering a quantity of gold; he was observed to converse in private with the Indian women, and particularly with Catalina, the one whose distinguished appearance had attracted the attention of Guacanagari. After remaining some time on board, he returned to the shore. It would seem from subsequent events, that the Cacique had been touched by the situation of this Indian beauty, or capti-

* Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. ii.

vated by her charms, and had undertaken to deliver her from bondage.

At midnight when the crew were buried in their first sleep, Catalina awakened her companions. The ship was anchored full three miles from the shore, and the sea was rough ; but they let themselves down from the side of the vessel, and swam bravely for the shore. With all their precautions, they were overheard by the watch, and the alarm was given. The boats were hastily manned, and gave chase in the direction of a light blazing on the shore, an evident beacon for the fugitives. Such was the vigor of these sea-nymphs, that they reached the land in safety ; four were retaken on the beach, but the heroic Catalina with the rest of her companions made good their escape into the forest.

When the day dawned Columbus sent to Guacanagari to demand the fugitives ; or if they were not in his possession, that he would have search made for them. The residence of the Cacique however, was silent and deserted ; not an Indian was to be seen. Either conscious of the suspicions of the Spaniards, and apprehensive of their hostility, or desirous to enjoy his prize unmolested, the Cacique had removed with all his effects, his household, and his followers, and had taken refuge with

his island beauty in the interior. This sudden and mysterious desertion gave redoubled force to the doubts heretofore entertained, and Guacanagari was generally stigmatized as a traitor to the white men, and the perfidious destroyer of the garrison.*

* Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. ii. Letter of Dr. Chanca. Cura de los Palacios, cap. 120, MS.

Chapter VII.

FOUNDING OF THE CITY OF ISABELLA—MALADIES OF THE SPANIARDS.

[1493.]

THE misfortunes of the Spaniards both by sea and land, in the vicinity of this harbor, threw a gloom round the neighborhood. The ruins of the fortress and the graves of their murdered countrymen were continually before their eyes, and the forests no longer looked beautiful while there was an idea that treachery might be lurking in their shades. The silence and dreariness, also, caused by the desertion of the natives, gave a sinister appearance to the place. It began to be considered by the credulous mariners as under some baneful influence or malignant star. These were sufficient objections to discourage the founding of a settlement, but there were others of a more solid nature. The land in the vicinity was low, moist, and unhealthy,

and there was no stone for building; Columbus determined, therefore to abandon the place altogether, and found his projected colony in some more favorable situation. No time was to be lost; the animals on board the ships were suffering from long confinement; and the multitude of persons, unaccustomed to the sea and pent up in the fleet, languished for the refreshment of the land. The lighter caravels, therefore, scoured the coast in each direction, entering the rivers and harbors in search of an advantageous site. They were instructed also to make inquiries after Guacanagari, of whom Columbus, notwithstanding every suspicious appearance, still retained a favorable opinion. The expeditions returned after ranging a considerable extent of coast without success. There were fine rivers and secure ports, but the coast was low and marshy, and deficient in stone. The country was generally deserted, or if any natives were seen they fled immediately to the woods. Melchor Maldonado had proceeded to the eastward until he came to the dominions of a cacique, who at first issued forth at the head of his warriors, with menacing aspect, but was readily conciliated. From him he learnt that Guacanagari had retired to the mountains. Another party discovered an Indian concealed near a hamlet, having

been disabled by a wound received from a lance when fighting against Caonabo. His account of the destruction of the fortress agreed with that of the Indians at the harbor, and concurred to vindicate the Cacique from the charge of treachery. Thus the Spaniards continued uncertain as to the real perpetrators of this dark and dismal tragedy.

Being convinced that there was no place in this part of the island favorable for a settlement, Columbus weighed anchor on the 7th of December, with the intention of seeking the port of La Plata. In consequence of adverse weather, however, he was obliged to put into a harbor about ten leagues east of Monte Christi; and on considering the place, was struck with its advantages.

The harbor was spacious and commanded by a point of land protected on one side by a natural rampart of rocks, and on another by an impervious forest, presenting a strong position for a fortress. There were two rivers, one large and the other small, watering a green and beautiful plain, and offering advantageous situations for mills. About a bow-shot from the sea, on the banks of one of the rivers, was an Indian village. The soil appeared to be fertile, the waters to abound in excellent fish, and the climate to be temperate and genial;

for the trees were in leaf, the shrubs in flower, and the birds in song, though it was the middle of December. They had not yet become familiarized with the temperature of this favored island, where the rigors of winter are unknown, where there is a perpetual succession, and even intermixture of fruit and flower, and where smiling verdure reigns throughout the year.

Another grand inducement to form their settlement in this place, was the information received from the Indians of the adjacent village, that the mountains of Cibao, where the gold mines were situated, lay at no great distance, and almost parallel to the harbor. It was determined, therefore, that there could not be a situation more favorable for their colony.

An animated scene now commenced. The troops and various persons belonging to the land-service, and the various laborers and artificers to be employed in building, were disembarked. The provisions, articles of traffic, guns and ammunition for defence, and implements of every kind, were brought to shore, as were also the cattle and live stock, which had suffered excessively from long restraint, especially the horses. There was a general joy at escaping from the irksome confinement of the ships, and once more tread-

ing the firm earth, and breathing the sweetness of the fields. An encampment was formed on the margin of the plain, around a basin or sheet of water, and in a little while the whole place was in activity. Thus was founded the first Christian city of the New World, to which Columbus gave the name of Isabella, in honor of his royal patroness.

A plan was formed, and streets and squares projected. The greatest diligence was then exerted in erecting a church, a public store-house, and a residence for the Admiral. These were built of stone, the private houses were constructed of wood, plaster, reeds, or such materials as the exigency of the case permitted, and for a short time every one exerted himself with the utmost zeal.

Maladies, however, soon broke out. Many unaccustomed to the sea had suffered greatly from confinement and sea-sickness, and from subsisting for a length of time on salt provisions much damaged, and mouldy biscuit. They suffered great exposure on the land also, before houses could be built for their reception; for the exhalations of a hot and moist climate and a new, rank soil, the humid vapors from rivers, and the stagnant air of close forests rendered the wilderness a place of severe trial to constitutions accustomed to old and highly culti-

Insula hyspa nc

vated countries. The labor also of building houses, clearing fields, setting out orchards, and planting gardens, having all to be done with great haste, bore hard upon men who after tossing so long upon the ocean stood in need of relaxation and repose.

The maladies of the mind mingled with those of the body. Many, as has been shown, had embarked in the expedition with visionary and romantic expectations. Some had anticipated the golden regions of Cipango and Cathay, where they were to amass wealth without toil and trouble; others a region of Asiatic luxury, abounding with delights; and others a splendid and open career for gallant adventures and chivalrous enterprises. What then was their disappointment to find themselves confined to the margin of an island; surrounded by impracticable forests; doomed to struggle with the rudeness of a wilderness; to toil painfully for mere subsistence, and to attain every comfort by the severest exertion. As to gold, it was brought to them from various quarters, but in small quantities, and it was evidently to be procured only by patient and persevering labor. All these disappointments sank deep into their hearts; their spirits flagged as their golden dreams melted away, and the gloom of despondency aided the ravages of disease.

Columbus himself did not escape the prevalent maladies. The arduous nature of his enterprise, the responsibility under which he found himself, not merely to his followers and his sovereigns, but to the world at large, had kept his mind in continual agitation. The cares of so large a squadron; the incessant vigilance required, not only against the lurking dangers of these unknown seas but against the passions and follies of his followers; the distress he had suffered from the fate of his murdered garrison, and his uncertainty as to the conduct of the barbarous tribes by which he was surrounded;—all these had harassed his mind and broken his rest while on board the ship; since landing, new toils and cares had crowded upon him, which, added to the exposures incident to his situation in this new climate, completely overpowered his strength. Still, though confined for several weeks to his bed by severe illness, his energetic mind rose superior to the sufferings of the body, and he continued to give directions about the building of the city and to superintend the general concerns of the expedition.*

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 50. Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 10. Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. ii. Letter of Dr. Chanca, etc.

Chapter VIII.

EXPEDITION OF ALONSO DE OJEDA TO EXPLORE THE INTERIOR OF THE ISLAND—DESPATCH OF THE SHIPS TO SPAIN.

[1493.]

THE ships having discharged their cargoes, it was necessary to send the greater part of them back to Spain. Here new anxieties pressed upon the mind of Columbus. He had hoped to find treasures of gold and precious merchandise accumulated by the men left behind on the first voyage ; or at least the sources of wealthy traffic ascertained, by which speedily to freight his vessels. The destruction of the garrison had defeated all those hopes. He was aware of the extravagant expectations entertained by the sovereigns and the nation. What would be their disappointment when the returning ships brought nothing but a tale of disaster ! Something must be done, before the vessels sailed,

to keep up the fame of his discoveries and justify his own magnificent representations.

As yet he knew nothing of the interior of the island. If it were really the island of Cipango, it must contain populous cities, existing probably in some more cultivated region, beyond the lofty mountains with which it was intersected. All the Indians concurred in mentioning Cibao as the tract of country whence they derived their gold. The very name of its cacique, Caonabo, signifying "The Lord of the Golden House," seemed to indicate the wealth of his dominions. The tract where the mines were said to abound lay at a distance of but three or four days' journey, directly in the interior; Columbus determined, therefore, to send an expedition to explore it, previous to the sailing of the ships. If the result should confirm his hopes, he would then be able to send home the fleet with confidence, bearing tidings of the discovery of the golden mountains of Cibao.*

The person he chose for this discovery was Alonso de Ojeda, the same cavalier who has been already noticed for his daring spirit and great bodily force and agility. Delighting in all service of a hazardous and adventurous nature, Ojeda was the more stimulated to this

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 10.

expedition from the formidable character of the mountain cacique, Caonabo, whose dominions he was to penetrate. He set out from the harbor early in January, 1494, accompanied by a small force of well-armed and determined men, several of them young and spirited cavaliers like himself. He struck directly southward into the interior. For the first two days the march was toilsome and difficult, through a country abandoned by its inhabitants—for terror of the Spaniards extended along the sea-coast. On the second evening they came to a lofty range of mountains which they ascended by an Indian path, winding up a steep and narrow defile, and they slept for the night at the summit. Hence, the next morning, they beheld the sun rise with great glory over a vast and delicious plain, covered with noble forests, studded with villages and hamlets, and enlivened by the shining waters of the Yaqui.

Descending into this plain Ojeda and his companions boldly entered the Indian villages. The inhabitants, far from being hostile, overwhelmed them with hospitality, and, in fact, impeded their journey by their kindness. They had also to ford many rivers in traversing this plain, so that they were five or six days in reaching the chain of mountains which locked up, as it were, the golden region of

Cibao. They penetrated into this district without meeting with any other obstacles than those presented by the rude nature of the country. Caonabo, so redoubtable for his courage and ferocity, must have been in some distant part of his dominions, for he never appeared to dispute their progress. The natives received them with kindness; they were naked and uncivilized, like the other inhabitants of the island, nor were there any traces of the important cities which their imagination had once pictured forth. They saw, however, ample signs of natural wealth. The sands of the mountain-streams glittered with particles of gold; these the natives would skilfully separate, and give to the Spaniards without expecting a recompense. In some places they picked up large specimens of virgin ore from the beds of torrents, and stones streaked and richly impregnated with it. Peter Martyr affirms that he saw a mass of rude gold weighing nine ounces, which Ojeda himself had found in one of the brooks.*

All these were considered as mere superficial washings of the soil, betraying the hidden treasures lurking in the deep veins and rocky bosoms of the mountains, and only requiring the hand of labor to bring them to

* Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. ii.

light. As the object of his expedition was merely to ascertain the nature of the country, Ojeda led back his little band to the harbor, full of enthusiastic accounts of the golden promise of these mountains. A young cavalier of the name of Gorvalan, who had been despatched at the same time on a similar expedition, and who had explored a different track of country, returned with similar reports. These flattering accounts served for a time to reanimate the drooping and despondent colonists, and induced Columbus to believe that it was only necessary to explore the mines of Cibao, to open inexhaustible sources of riches. He determined, as soon as his health would permit, to repair in person to the mountains and seek a favorable site for a mining establishment.*

The season was now propitious for the return of the fleet, and Columbus lost no time in despatching twelve of the ships under the command of Antonio de Torres, retaining only five for the service of the colony.

By this opportunity he sent home specimens of the gold found among the mountains and rivers of Cibao, and all such fruits and plants as were curious, or appeared to be valuable. He wrote in the most sanguine terms of the

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 50.

expeditions of Ojeda and Gorvalan, the last of whom returned to Spain in the fleet. He repeated his confident anticipations of soon being able to make abundant shipments of gold, of precious drugs and spices; the search for them being delayed for the present by the sickness of himself and people, and the cares and labors required in building the infant city. He described the beauty and fertility of the island; its ranges of noble mountains; its wide, abundant plains, watered by beautiful rivers; the quick fecundity of the soil, evinced in the luxuriant growth of the sugar-cane, and of various grains and vegetables brought from Europe.

As it would take some time, however, to obtain provisions from their fields and gardens and the produce of their live stock adequate to the subsistence of the colony, which consisted of about a thousand souls, and as they could not accustom themselves to the food of the natives, Columbus requested present supplies from Spain. Their provisions were already growing scanty. Much of their wine had been lost, from the badness of the casks; and the colonists, in their infirm state of health, suffered greatly from the want of their accustomed diet. There was an immediate necessity of medicines, clothing, and arms.

Horses were required, likewise, for the public works and for military service—being found of great effect in awing the natives who had the utmost dread of those animals. He requested also an additional number of workmen and mechanics, and men skilled in mining and in smelting and purifying ore. He recommended various persons to the notice and favor of the sovereigns, among whom was Pedro Margarite, an Arragonian cavalier of the order of St. Jago, who had a wife and children to be provided for, and who for his good services, Columbus begged might be appointed to a command in the order to which he belonged. In like manner he entreated patronage for Juan Aguado, who was about to return in the fleet, making particular mention of his merits. From both of these men he was destined to experience the most signal ingratitude.

In these ships he sent also the men, women, and children taken in the Caribbee Islands, recommending that they should be carefully instructed in the Spanish language and the Christian faith. From the roving and adventurous nature of these people, and their general acquaintance with the various languages of this great archipelago, he thought that, when the precepts of religion and the usages

of civilization had reformed their savage manners and cannibal propensities, they might be rendered eminently serviceable as interpreters, and as means of propagating the doctrines of Christianity.

Among the many sound and salutary suggestions in his letter, there is one of a most pernicious tendency, written in that mistaken view of natural rights prevalent at the day, but fruitful of much wrong and misery in the world. Considering that the greater the number of these cannibal pagans transferred to the Catholic soil of Spain, the greater would be the number of souls put in the way of salvation, he proposed to establish an exchange of them as slaves, against live stock, to be furnished by merchants to the colony. The ships to bring such stock were to land nowhere but at the island of Isabella, where the Carib captives would be ready for delivery. A duty was to be levied on each slave for the benefit of the royal revenue. In this way the colony would be furnished with all kinds of live stock free of expense; the peaceful islanders would be freed from warlike and inhuman neighbors; the royal treasury would be greatly enriched; and a vast number of souls would be snatched from perdition, and carried, as it were, by main force to Heaven. Such is the strange sophistry

by which upright men may sometimes deceive themselves. Columbus feared the disappointment of the sovereigns in respect to the product of his enterprises, and was anxious to devise some mode of lightening their expenses until he could open some ample source of profit. The conversion of Infidels, by fair means or foul, by persuasion or force, was one of the popular tenets of the day ; and in recommending the enslaving of the Caribs, Columbus thought that he was obeying the dictates of his conscience, when he was in reality listening to the incitements of his interest. It is but just to add, that the sovereigns did not accord with his ideas, but ordered that the Caribs should be converted like the rest of the islanders ; a command which emanated from the merciful heart of Isabella, who ever showed herself the benign protectress of the Indians.

The fleet put to sea on the 2d of February, 1494. Though it brought back no wealth to Spain, yet expectation was kept alive by the sanguine letter of Columbus and the specimens of gold which he transmitted ; his favorable accounts were corroborated by letters from Friar Boyle, Doctor Chanca, and other persons of credibility, and by the personal reports of Gorvalan. The sordid calculations of petty spirits

were as yet overruled by the enthusiasm of generous minds, captivated by the lofty nature of these enterprises. There was something wonderfully grand in the idea of thus introducing new races of animals and plants, of building cities, extending colonies, and sowing the seeds of civilization and enlightened empire in this beautiful but savage world. It struck the minds of learned and classical men with admiration, filling them with pleasant dreams and reveries, and seeming to realize the poetical pictures of the olden time.

"Columbus," says old Peter Martyr, "has begun to build a city, as he has lately written to me, and to sow our seeds and propagate our animals! Who of us shall now speak with wonder of Saturn, Ceres, and Triptolemus travelling about the earth to spread new inventions among mankind? Or of the Phœnicians, who built Tyre or Sidon? Or of the Tyrians themselves, whose roving desires led them to migrate into foreign lands, to build new cities and establish new communities?" *

Such were the comments of enlightened and benevolent men, who hailed with enthusiasm the discovery of the New World, not for the wealth it would bring to Europe but for the field it would open for glorious and benevolent enterprises, and the blessings and improve-

* Letter 153 to Pomponius Lætus.

ments of civilized life, which it would widely dispense through barbarous and uncultivated regions.

NOTE.

"Isabella at the present day is quite overgrown with forests, in the midst of which are still to be seen, partly standing, the pillars of the church, some remains of the King's storehouses, and part of the residence of Columbus, all built of hewn stone. The small fortress is also a prominent ruin; and a little north of it is a circular pillar about ten feet high and as much in diameter, of solid masonry, nearly entire, which appears to have had a wooden gallery or battlement round the top for the convenience of room, and in the centre of which was planted the flag-staff. Having discovered the remains of an iron clamp imbedded in the stone, which served to secure the flag-staff itself, I tore it out, and now consign to you this curious relic of the first foothold of civilization in the New World, after it has been exposed to the elements nearly three hundred and fifty years."—*From the letter of T. S. Heneken, Esq.*

Chapter VIII.

DISCONTENTS AT ISABELLA—MUTINY OF BERNAL DIAZ DE PISA.

[1494.]

THE embryo city of Isabella was rapidly assuming a form. A dry stone wall surrounded it, to protect it from any sudden attack of the natives, although the most friendly disposition was evinced by the Indians of the vicinity, who brought supplies of their simple articles of food and gave them in exchange for European trifles. On the day of the Epiphany, the 6th of February, the church being sufficiently completed, high mass was celebrated with great pomp and ceremony by Friar Boyle and the twelve ecclesiastics. The affairs of the settlement being thus apparently in a regular train, Columbus, though still confined by indisposition, began to make arrangements for his contemplated expedition to the mountains of Cibao, when

an unexpected disturbance in his little community for a time engrossed his attention.

The sailing of the fleet to Spain had been a melancholy sight to many, whose terms of enlistment compelled them to remain on the island. Disappointed in their expectations of immediate wealth, disgusted with the labors imposed on them, and appalled by the maladies prevalent throughout the community, they began to look with horror upon the surrounding wilderness, as destined to be the grave of their hopes and of themselves. When the last sail disappeared they felt as if completely severed from their country, and the tender recollections of home, which had been checked for a time by the novelty and bustle around them, rushed with sudden force upon their minds. To return to Spain became their ruling idea, and the same want of reflection which had hurried them into the enterprise without inquiring into its real nature, now prompted them to extricate themselves from it by any means however desperate.

Where popular discontents prevail, there is seldom wanting some daring spirit to give them a dangerous direction. One Bernal Diaz de Pisa, a man of some importance, who had held a civil office about the court, had come out with the expedition as comptroller. He

seemed to have presumed upon his official powers and to have had early differences with the Admiral. Disgusted with his employment in the colony, he soon made a faction among the discontented, and proposed that they should take advantage of the indisposition of Columbus to seize upon some or all of the five ships in the harbor and return in them to Spain. It would be easy to justify their clandestine return by preferring a complaint against the Admiral, representing the fallacy of his enterprises and accusing him of gross deceptions and exaggerations in his accounts of the countries he had discovered. It is probable that some of these people really considered him culpable of the charges thus fabricated against him; for, in the disappointment of their avaricious hopes, they overlooked the real value of those fertile islands which were to enrich nations by the produce of their soil. Every country was sterile and unprofitable in their eyes that did not immediately teem with gold. Though they had continual proofs, in the specimens brought by the natives to the settlement, or furnished to Ojeda and Gorvalan, that the rivers and mountains in the interior abounded with ore, yet even these daily proofs were falsified in their eyes. One Fermin Cedo, a wrong-headed and obstinate man, who had

come out as assayer and purifier of metals, had imbibed the same prejudice against the expedition with Bernal Diaz. He pertinaciously insisted that there was no gold in the island; or at least that it was found in such inconsiderable quantities as not to repay the search. He declared that the large grains of virgin ore brought by the natives had been melted; that they had been the slow accumulations of many years, having remained a long time in the families of the Indians, and handed down from generation to generation—which in many instances was probably the case. Other specimens of a large size he pronounced of a very inferior quality, and debased with brass by the natives. The words of this man outweighed the evidence of facts, and many joined him in the belief that the island was really destitute of gold. It was not until some time afterwards that the real character of Fermin Cedo was ascertained, and the discovery made that his ignorance was at least equal to his obstinacy and presumption—qualities apt to enter largely into the compound of a meddlesome and mischievous man.*

Encouraged by such substantial co-operation, a number of turbulent spirits concerted to take immediate possession of the ships and

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 120, 122, MS.

make sail for Europe. The influence of Bernal Diaz de Pisa at court would obtain for them a favorable hearing, and they trusted to their unanimous representations to prejudice Columbus in the opinion of the public, ever fickle in its smiles and most ready to turn suddenly and capriciously from the favorite it has most idolized.

Fortunately this mutiny was discovered before it proceeded to action. Columbus immediately ordered the ringleaders to be arrested. On making investigation, a memorial or information against himself, full of slanders and misrepresentations, was found concealed in the buoy of one of the ships. It was in the handwriting of Bernal Diaz. The Admiral conducted himself with great moderation. Out of respect to the rank and station of Diaz, he forbore to inflict any punishment; but confined him on board one of the ships to be sent to Spain for trial, together with the process or investigation of his offence, and the seditious memorial which had been discovered. Several of the inferior mutineers were punished according to the degree of their culpability, but not with the severity which their offence deserved. To guard against any recurrence of a similar attempt, Columbus ordered that all the guns and naval munitions should be taken out of

four of the vessels and put into the principal ship, which was given in charge to persons in whom he could place implicit confidence.*

This was the first time Columbus exercised the right of punishing delinquents in his new government, and it immediately awakened the most violent animadversions. His measures, though necessary for the general safety and characterized by the greatest lenity, were censured as arbitrary and vindictive. Already the disadvantage of being a foreigner among the people he was to govern was clearly manifested. He had national prejudices to encounter, of all others the most general and illiberal. He had no natural friends to rally round him; whereas the mutineers had connections in Spain, friends in the colony, and met with sympathy in every discontented mind. An early hostility was thus engendered against Columbus, which continued to increase throughout his life, and the seeds were sown of a series of factions and mutinies which afterwards distracted the island.

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 11. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 30.

Chapter IX.

EXPEDITION OF COLUMBUS TO THE MOUNTAINS OF CIBAO.

[1494.]

HAVING at length recovered from his long illness, and the mutiny at the settlement being effectually checked, Columbus prepared for his immediate departure for Cibao. He intrusted the command of the city and the ships during his absence to his brother Don Diego, appointing able persons to counsel and assist him. Don Diego is represented by Las Casas, who knew him personally, as a man of great merit and discretion, of a gentle and pacific disposition, and more characterized by simplicity than shrewdness. He was sober in his attire, wearing almost the dress of an ecclesiastic, and Las Casas thinks he had secret hopes of preferment in the Church*; indeed Columbus

* Las Casas, *Hist Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 82, MS.

intimates as much when he mentions him in his will.

As the Admiral intended to build a fortress in the mountains and to form an establishment for working the mines, he took with him the necessary artificers, workmen, miners, munitions, and implements. He was also about to enter the territories of the redoubtable Caonabo. It was important, therefore, to take with him a force that should not only secure him against any warlike opposition, but should spread through the country a formidable idea of the power of the white men, and deter the Indians from any future violence, either towards communities or wandering individuals. Every healthy person therefore who could be spared from the settlement was put in requisition, together with all the cavalry that could be mustered; and every arrangement was made to strike the savages with the display of military splendor.

On the 12th of March Columbus set out at the head of about four hundred men well armed and equipped, with shining helmets and corselets; with arquebuses, lances, swords, and cross-bows, and followed by a multitude of the neighboring Indians. They sallied from the city in martial array, with banners flying, and sound of drum and trumpet.

Their march for the first day was across the plain between the sea and the mountains, fording two rivers, and passing through a fair and verdant country. They encamped in the evening in the midst of pleasant fields, at the foot of a wild and rocky pass of the mountains.

The ascent of this rugged defile presented formidable difficulties to the little army, encumbered as it was with various implements and munitions. There was nothing but an Indian footpath, winding among rocks and precipices, or through brakes and thickets, entangled by the rich vegetation of a tropical forest. A number of high-spirited young cavaliers volunteered to open a route for the army. They had probably learnt this kind of service in the Moorish wars, where it was often necessary on a sudden to open roads for the march of troops, and the conveyance of artillery across the mountains of Granada. Throwing themselves in advance with laborers and pioneers, whom they stimulated by their example as well as by promises of liberal reward, they soon constructed the first road formed in the New World, and which was called *El Puerto de los Hidalgos*, or The Gentleman's Pass, in honor of the gallant cavaliers who effected it.*

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 50. *Hidalgo, i.e., Hijo de Algo*, literally, "a son of somebody," in contra-

On the following day the army toiled up this steep defile, and arrived where the gorge of the mountain opened into the interior. Here a land of promise suddenly burst upon their view. It was the same glorious prospect which had delighted Ojeda and his companions. Below lay a vast and delicious plain, painted and enamelled, as it were, with all the rich variety of tropical vegetation. The magnificent forests presented that mingled beauty and majesty of vegetable forms known only to these generous climates. Palms of prodigious height and spreading mahogany trees towered from amid a wilderness of variegated foliage. Freshness and verdure were maintained by numerous streams, which meandered gleaming through the deep bosom of the woodland; while various villages and hamlets, peeping from among the trees, and the smoke of others rising out of the midst of the forest, gave signs of a numerous population. The luxuriant landscape extended as far as the eye could reach, until it appeared to melt away and mingle with the horizon. The Spaniards gazed with rapture upon this soft voluptuous country, which seemed to realize their ideas of a terrestrial paradise, and Columbus, struck with its vast

distinction to an obscure and low-born man, a son of nobody.

extent, gave it the name of the Vega Real, or Royal Plain.*

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 90, MS.

Extract of a letter from T. S. Heneken, Esq., dated Santiago (St. Domingo), 20th September, 1847.—"The route over which Columbus traced his course from Isabella to the mountains of Cibao exists in all its primitive rudeness. The Puerto de los Hidalgos is still the narrow rugged footpath winding among rocks and precipices, leading through the only practicable defile which traverses the Monte Christi range of mountains in this vicinity, at present called the Pass of Marney; and it is somewhat surprising that, of this first and remarkable footprint of the white man in the New World, there does not at the present day exist the least tradition of its former name or importance.

"The spring of cool and delightful water met with in the gorge, in a deep, dark glen overshadowed by palm and mahogany trees, near the outlet where the magnificent Vega breaks upon the view, still continues to quench the thirst of the weary traveller. When I drank from this lonely little fountain, I could hardly realize the fact that Columbus must likewise have partaken of its sparkling waters, when at the height of his glory, surrounded by cavaliers attired in the gorgeous costumes of the age, and warriors recently from the Moorish wars.

"Judging by the distance stated to have been travelled over the plain, Columbus must have crossed the Yaqui near or at Ponton, which very likely received its name from the rafts or pontoons employed to cross

Having descended the rugged pass, the army issued upon the plain in martial style, with great clangor of warlike instruments. When the Indians beheld this shining band of warriors, glittering in steel, emerging from the mountains with prancing steeds and flaunting banners, and heard for the first time their rocks and forests echoing to the din of drum and trumpet, they might well have taken such a wonderful pageant for a supernatural vision.

In this way Columbus disposed of his forces whenever he approached a populous village, placing the cavalry in front, for the horses inspired a mingled terror and admiration among the natives. Las Casas observes, that at first they supposed the rider and his horse to be one animal, and nothing could exceed their astonishment at seeing the horsemen dismount; a circumstance which shows that the alleged origin of the ancient fable of the Centaurs is at least founded in nature. On the approach of the army the Indians generally fled with

the river. Abundance of reeds grow along its banks, and the remains of an Indian village are still very distinctly to be traced in the vicinity. By this route he avoided two large rivers, the Amine and the Mar, which discharge their waters into the Yaqui opposite Esperanza.

"The road from Ponton to the river Hanique passes through the defiles of La Cuesta and Nicayagua."

terror, and took refuge in their houses. Such was their simplicity, that they merely put up a slight barrier of reeds at the portal, and seemed to consider themselves perfectly secure. Columbus, pleased to meet with such artlessness, ordered that these frail barriers should be scrupulously respected, and the inhabitants allowed to remain in their fancied security.* By degrees their fears were allayed, through the mediation of interpreters, and the distribution of trifling presents. Their kindness and gratitude could not then be exceeded, and the march of the army was continually retarded by the hospitality of the numerous villages through which it passed. Such was the frank communion among these people, that the Indians who accompanied the army entered without ceremony into the houses, helping themselves to anything of which they stood in need without exciting surprise or anger in the inhabitants. The latter offered to do the same with respect to the Spaniards, and seemed astonished when they met a repulse. This, it is probable, was the case merely with respect to articles of food; for we are told that the Indians were not careless in their notions of property, and the crime of theft was one of the few which were punished among them with great severity.

* Las Casas, lib. li., cap. 90.

Food however is generally open to free participation in savage life, and is rarely made an object of barter until habits of trade have been introduced by the white men. The untutored savage, in almost every part of the world, scorns to make a traffic of hospitality.

After a march of five leagues across the plain they arrived at the banks of a large and beautiful stream, called by the natives Yaqui, but to which the Admiral gave the name of the River of Reeds. He was not aware that it was the same stream which, after winding through the Vega, falls into the sea near Monte Christi, and which in his first voyage he had named the River of Gold. On its green banks the army encamped for the night, animated and delighted with the beautiful scenes through which they had passed. They bathed and sported in the waters of the Yaqui, enjoying the amenity of the surrounding landscape and the delightful breezes which prevail in that genial season. "For though there is but little difference," observes Las Casas, "from one month to another in all the year in this island, and in most parts of these Indias, yet in the period from September to May, it is like living in Paradise."*

On the following morning they crossed this

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 90, MS.

stream by the aid of canoes and rafts, swimming the horses over. For two days they continued their march through the same kind of rich level country, diversified by noble forests and watered by abundant streams, several of which descended from the mountains of Cibao, and were said to bring down gold-dust mingled with their sands. To one of these, the limpid waters of which ran over a bed of smooth round pebbles, Columbus gave the name of Rio Verde, or Green River, from the verdure and freshness of its banks. Its Indian name was Nicayagua, which it still retains.* In the course of this march they passed through numerous villages, where they experienced generally the same reception. The inhabitants fled at their approach, putting up their slight barricadoes of reeds, but as before they were easily won to familiarity, and tasked their limited means to entertain the strangers.

Thus penetrating into the midst of this great island, where every scene presented the wild luxuriance of beautiful but uncivilized nature, they arrived on the evening of the second day at a chain of lofty and rugged mountains, forming a kind of barrier to the Vega. These

* The name of Rio Verde was afterwards given to a small stream which crosses the road from Santiago to La Vega, a branch of the river Yuna.

Columbus was told were the golden mountains of Cibao, whose region commenced at the rocky summits. The country now beginning to grow rough and difficult and the people being way-worn, they encamped for the night at the foot of a steep defile which led up into the mountains, and pioneers were sent in advance to open a road for the army. From this place they sent back mules for a supply of bread and wine, their provisions beginning to grow scanty, for they had not as yet accustomed themselves to the food of the natives, which was afterwards found to be of that light, digestible kind suitable to the climate.

On the next morning they resumed their march up a narrow and steep glen, winding among craggy rocks, where they were obliged to lead the horses. Arrived at the summit they once more enjoyed a prospect of the delicious Vega, which here presented a still grander appearance, stretching far and wide on either hand, like a vast verdant lake. This noble plain, according to Las Casas, is eighty leagues in length, and from twenty to thirty in breadth, and of incomparable beauty.

They now entered Cibao, the famous region of gold, which, as if nature delighted in contrarieties, displayed a miser-like poverty of exterior, in proportion to its hidden treasures.

Instead of the soft luxuriant landscape of the Vega, they beheld chains of rocky and sterile mountains, scantily clothed with lofty pines. The trees in the valleys also, instead of possessing the rich tufted foliage common to other parts of the island, were meagre and dwarfish, excepting such as grew on the banks of streams. The very name of the country bespoke the nature of the soil,—Cibao, in the language of the natives, signifying a stone. Still, however, there were deep glens and shady ravines among the mountains, watered by limpid rivulets, where the green herbage and strips of woodland were the more delightful to the eye from the neighboring sterility. But what consoled the Spaniards for the asperity of the soil was to observe among the sands of those crystal streams glittering particles of gold, which though scanty in quantity were regarded as earnests of the wealth locked up within the mountains.

The natives having been previously visited by the exploring party under Ojeda came forth to meet them with great alacrity, bringing food, and above all, grains and particles of gold collected in the brooks and torrents. From the quantities of gold-dust in every stream, Columbus was convinced there must be several mines in the vicinity. He had met with speci-

mens of amber and lapis lazuli, though in very small quantities, and thought he had discovered a mine of copper. He was about eighteen leagues from the settlement; the rugged nature of the mountains made a communication, even from this distance, laborious. He gave up the idea, therefore, of penetrating farther into the country, and determined to establish a fortified post in this neighborhood, with a large number of men, as well to work the mines as to explore the rest of the province. He accordingly selected a pleasant situation on an eminence almost entirely surrounded by a small river called the Yanique, the waters of which were as pure as if distilled, and the sound of its current musical to the ear. In its bed were found curious stones of various colors, large masses of beautiful marble, and pieces of pure jasper. From the foot of the height extended one of those graceful and verdant plains called savannas, which was freshened and fertilized by the river.*

On this eminence Columbus ordered a strong fortress of wood to be erected, capable of defence against any attack of the natives, and protected by a deep ditch on the side which the river did not secure. To this fortress he gave the name of St. Thomas, intended as a pleas-

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 90, MS.

ant, though pious reproof of the incredulity of Firmin Cedo and his doubting adherents, who obstinately refused to believe that the island produced gold, until they beheld it with their eyes and touched it with their hands.*

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 90, MS.

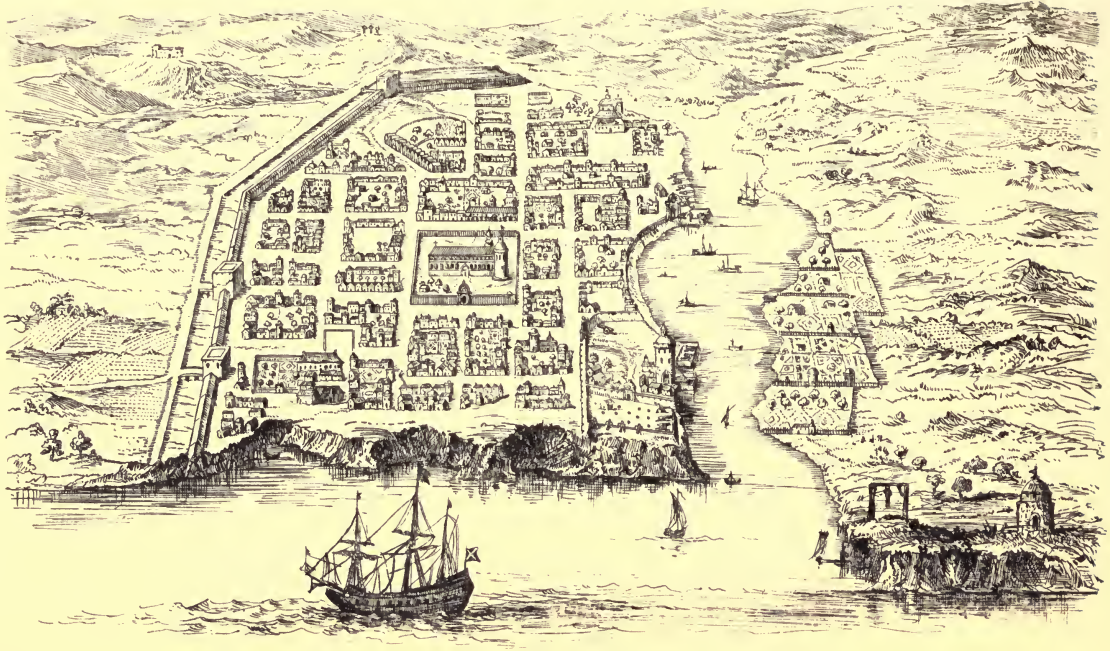
From the letter of T. S. Heneken, Esq., 1847.—"Traces of the old fortress of St. Thomas still exist, though, as has happened to the Puerta de los Hidalgos, all tradition concerning it has long been lost.

"Having visited a small Spanish village known by the name of Hanique, situated on the banks of that stream, I heard by accident the name of a farm at no great distance, called La Fortaleza. This excited my curiosity, and I proceeded to the spot, a short distance up the river; yet nothing could be learnt from the inhabitants; it was only by ranging the river's banks through a dense and luxuriant forest, that I by accident stumbled upon the site of the fortress.

"The remarkable turn of the river; the ditch, still very perfect; the entrance and the covert ways on each side for descending to the river, with a fine esplanade of beautiful short grass in front, complete the picture described by Las Casas.

"The square occupied by the fort is now completely covered with forest trees, undistinguishable from those of the surrounding country; which corresponds to this day exactly with the description given above, three centuries since, by Columbus, Ojeda, and Juan de Luxan.

"The only change to notice is, that the neat little Indian villages, swarming with an innocent and happy population, have totally disappeared; there being at



The natives, having heard of the arrival of the Spaniards in their vicinity, came flocking from various parts, anxious to obtain European trinkets. The Admiral signified to them that anything would be given in exchange for gold; upon hearing this some of them ran to a neighboring river, and gathering and sifting its sands, returned in a little while with considerable quantities of gold-dust. One old man brought two pieces of virgin ore, weighing an ounce, and thought himself richly repaid when he received a hawks'-bell. On

present only a few scattered huts of indigent Spaniards to be met with, buried in the gloom of the mountains.

"The traces of those villages are rarely to be discovered at the present day. The situation of one near Ponton, was well chosen for defence, being built on a high bank between deep and precipitous ravines. A large square occupied the centre; in the rear of each dwelling were thrown the sweepings of the apartments and the ashes from the fires, which form a line of mounds, mixed up with broken Indian utensils. As it lays in the direct road from Isabella, Cibao, and La Vega, and commands the best fording place in the neighborhood for crossing the river Yaqui in dry seasons, it must, no doubt, have been a place of considerable resort at the time of the discovery—most likely a pontoon or large canoe was stationed here for the facility of communication between St. Thomas and Isabella, whence it derived its name."

remarking that the Admiral was struck with the size of these specimens, he affected to treat them with contempt, as insignificant, intimating by signs, that in his country, which lay within half a day's journey, they found pieces of gold as big as an orange. Other Indians brought grains of gold weighing ten and twelve drachms, and declared that in the country whence they got them, there were masses of ore as large as the head of a child.* As usual, however, these golden tracts were always in some remote valley or along some rugged and sequestered stream; and the wealthiest spot was sure to be at the greatest distance,—for the land of promise is ever beyond the mountain.

* Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. iii.

Chapter X.

EXCURSION OF JUAN DE LUXAN AMONG THE MOUNTAINS—CUSTOMS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATIVES—COLUMBUS RETURNS TO ISABELLA.

[1494.]

WHILE the Admiral remained among the mountains, superintending the building of the fortress, he despatched a young cavalier of Madrid, named Juan de Luxan, with a small band of armed men, to range about the country, and explore the whole of the province, which, from the reports of the Indians, appeared to be equal in extent to the kingdom of Portugal. Luxan returned after a few days' absence, with the most satisfactory accounts. He had traversed a great part of Cibao which he found more capable of cultivation than had at first been imagined. It was generally mountainous, and the soil covered with large round pebbles of a blue color, yet there was good

pasturage in many of the valleys. The mountains, also, being watered by frequent showers, produced grass of surprisingly quick and luxuriant growth, often reaching to the saddles of the horses. The forests seemed to Luxan to be full of valuable spices; he being deceived by the odors emitted by those aromatic plants and herbs which abound in the woodlands of the tropics. There were great vines also, climbing to the very summits of the trees and bearing clusters of grapes entirely ripe, full of juice, and of a pleasant flavor. Every valley and glen possessed its streams, large or small, according to the size of the neighboring mountain, and all yielding more or less gold, in small particles. Luxan was supposed likewise to have learned from the Indians many of the secrets of their mountains; to have been shown the parts where the greatest quantity of ore was found, and to have been taken to the richest streams. On all these points however he observed a discreet mystery, communicating the particulars to no one but the Admiral.*

The fortress of St. Thomas being nearly completed, Columbus gave it in command to Pedro Margarite, the same cavalier whom he had recommended to the favor of the sov-

* Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. iii.

ereigns, and he left him with a garrison of fifty-six men. He then set out on his return to Isabella. On arriving on the banks of the Rio Verde, or Nicayagua, in the Royal Vega, he found a number of Spaniards on their way to the fortress with supplies. He remained therefore a few days in the neighborhood, searching for the best fording-place of the river, and establishing a route between the fortress and the harbor. During this time he resided in the Indian villages, endeavoring to accustom his people to the food of the natives, as well as to inspire the latter with a mingled feeling of good-will and reverence for the white men.

From the report of Luxan, Columbus had derived some information concerning the character and customs of the natives, and he acquired still more from his own observations in the course of his sojourn among the tribes of the mountains and the plains. And here a brief notice of a few of the characteristics and customs of these people may be interesting. They are given, not merely as observed by the Admiral and his officers during this expedition, but as recorded some time afterwards, in a crude dissertation, by a friar by the name of Roman ; a poor hermit as he styled himself, of the order of the Ieronimites, who was one

of the colleagues of Father Boyle and resided for some time in the Vega as a missionary.

Columbus had already discovered the error of one of his opinions concerning these islanders, formed during his first voyage. They were not so entirely pacific, nor so ignorant of warlike arts, as he had imagined. He had been deceived by the enthusiasm of his own feelings, and by the gentleness of Guacanagari and his subjects. The casual descents of the Caribs had compelled the inhabitants of the seashore to acquaint themselves with the use of arms. Some of the mountain tribes near the coast, particularly on the side which looked towards the Caribbee Islands, were of a more hardy and warlike character than those of the plains. Caonabo, also, the Carib chieftain, had introduced something of his own warrior spirit in the centre of the island. Yet, generally speaking, the habits of the people were mild and gentle. If wars sometimes occurred among them they were of short duration, and unaccompanied by any great effusion of blood; and, in general, they mingled amicably and hospitably with each other.

Columbus had also at first indulged in the error that the natives of Hayti were destitute of all notions of religion, and he had consequently flattered himself that it would be

easier to introduce into their minds the doctrines of Christianity ; not aware that it is more difficult to light up the fire of devotion in the cold heart of an atheist, than to direct the flame to a new object, when it is already enkindled. There are few beings however so destitute of reflection, as not to be impressed with the conviction of an overruling deity. A nation of atheists never existed. It was soon discovered that these islanders had their creed, though of a vague and simple nature. They believed in one Supreme Being, inhabiting the sky, who was immortal, omnipotent, and invisible ; to whom they ascribed an origin, who had a mother, but no father.* They never addressed their worship directly to him, but employed inferior deities, called *Zemes*, as messengers and mediators. Each cacique had his tutelar deity of this order, whom he invoked and pretended to consult in all his public undertakings, and who was reverenced by his people. He had a house apart, as a temple to this deity, in which was an image of his *Zemi*, carved of wood or stone, or shaped of clay or cotton, and generally of some monstrous and hideous form. Each family and each individual had likewise a particular *Zemi*, or pro-

* *Escritura de Fr. Roman. Hist. del Almirante.*

tecting genius, like the *Lares* and *Penates* of the ancients. They were placed in every part of their houses, or carved on their furniture; some had them of a small size, and bound them about their foreheads when they went to battle. They believed their *Zemes* to be transferable, with all their powers, and often stole them from each other. When the Spaniards came among them, they often hid their idols, lest they should be taken away. They believed that these *Zemes* presided over every object in nature, each having a particular charge or government. They influenced the seasons and the elements, causing sterile or abundant years; exciting hurricanes and whirlwinds, and tempests of rain and thunder, or sending sweet and temperate breezes and fruitful showers. They governed the seas and forests, the springs and fountains; like the Nereids, the Dryads, and Satyrs of antiquity. They gave success in hunting and fishing; they guided the waters of the mountains into safe channels, and led them down to wander through the plains, in gentle brooks and peaceful rivers; or, if incensed, they caused them to burst forth into rushing torrents and overwhelming floods, inundating and laying waste the valleys.

The natives had their *Butios*, or priests, who pretended to hold communion with these *Zemes*.

They practised religious fasts and ablutions, and inhaled the powder or drank the infusion of a certain herb, which produced a temporary intoxication or delirium. In the course of this process they professed to have trances and visions, and that the *Zemes* revealed to them future events, or instructed them in the treatment of maladies. They were, in general, great herbalists, and well acquainted with the medicinal properties of trees and vegetables. They cured diseases through their knowledge of simples, but always with many mysterious rites and ceremonies, and supposed charms; chanting, and burning a light in the chamber of the patient, and pretending to exorcise the malady, to expel it from the mansion, and to send it to the sea or to the mountain.*

Their bodies were painted or tattooed with figures of the *Zemes*, which were regarded with horror by the Spaniards, as so many representations of the devil; and the *Butios*, esteemed as saints by the natives, were abhorred by the former as necromancers. The *Butios* often assisted the caciques in practising deceptions upon their subjects, speaking oracularly through the *Zemes*, by means of hollow tubes; inspiriting the Indians to battle by predicting success, or

* Oveido, *Cronica*, lib. v., cap. 1.

dealing forth such promises or menaces as might suit the purpose of the chieftain.

There is but one of their solemn religious ceremonies of which any record exists. The cacique proclaimed a day when a kind of festival was to be held in honor of his *Zemes*. His subjects assembled from all parts and formed a solemn procession; the married men and women decorated with their most precious ornaments, the young females entirely naked. The cacique, or the principal personage, marched at their head, beating a kind of drum. In this way they proceeded to the consecrated house or temple, in which were set up the images of the *Zemes*. Arrived at the door, the cacique seated himself on the outside, continuing to beat his drum as the procession entered, the females carrying baskets of cakes ornamented with flowers and singing as they advanced. These offerings were received by the *Butios* with loud cries, or rather howlings. They broke the cakes after they had been offered to the *Zemes*, and distributed the portions to the heads of families, who preserved them carefully throughout the year as preventive of all adverse accidents. This done, the females danced at a given signal, singing songs in honor of the *Zemes*, or in praise of the heroic actions of their an-

cient caciques. The whole ceremony finished by invoking the *Zemes* to watch over and protect the nation.*

Besides the *Zemes*, each cacique had three idols or talismans, which were mere stones, but which were held in great reverence by themselves and their subjects. One they supposed had the power to produce abundant harvests, another to remove all pain from women in travail, and the third to call forth rain or sunshine. Three of these were sent home by Columbus to the sovereigns.†

The ideas of the natives with respect to the creation were vague and undefined. They gave their own island of Hayti priority of existence over all others, and believed that the sun and moon originally issued out of a cavern in the island to give light to the world. This cavern still exists, about seven or eight leagues from Cape François, now Cape Haytien, and is known by the name of La Voute à Minguet. It is about one hundred and fifty feet in depth, and nearly the same in height, but very narrow. It receives no light but from the entrance, and from a round hole in the roof, whence it was said the sun and moon issued forth to take their places in the sky. The

* Charlevoix, *Hist. St. Domingo*, lib. i., p. 56.

† *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 61.

vault was so fair and regular, that it appeared a work of art rather than of nature. In the time of Charlevoix the figures of various *Zemes* were still to be seen cut in the rocks, and there were the remains of niches, as if to receive statues. This cavern was held in great veneration. It was painted and adorned with green branches and other simple decorations. There were in it two images or *Zemes*. When there was a want of rain the natives made pilgrimages and processions to it, with songs and dances, bearing offerings of fruits and flowers.*

They believed that mankind issued from another cavern, the large men from a great aperture, the small men from a little cranny. They were for a long time destitute of women, but, wandering on one occasion near a small lake, they saw certain animals among the branches of the trees, which proved to be women. On attempting to catch them, however, they were found to be as slippery as eels, so that it was impossible to hold them. At length they employed certain men whose hands were rendered rough by a kind of leprosy. These succeeded in securing four of these slippery females, from whom the world was peopled.

While the men inhabited this cavern they dared only to venture forth at night, for the

* Charlevoix, *Hist. St. Domingo*, lib. i., p. 60.

sight of the sun was fatal to them, turning them into trees and stones. A cacique, named Vagoniona, sent one of his men forth from the cave to fish, who lingering at his sport until the sun had risen, was turned into a bird of melodious note, the same which Columbus mistook for the nightingale. They added, that yearly about the time he had suffered this transformation, he came in the night with a mournful song, bewailing his misfortune; which was the cause why that bird always sang in the night season.*

Like most savage nations they had a tradition concerning the universal deluge, equally fanciful with most of the preceding; for it is singular how the human mind, in its natural state, is apt to account by trivial and familiar causes for great events. They said that there once lived on the island a mighty cacique, who slew his only son for conspiring against him. He afterwards collected and picked his bones and preserved them in a gourd, as was the custom of the natives with the relics of their friends. On a subsequent day the cacique and his wife opened the gourd to contemplate the bones of their son, when to their astonishment several fish, great and small, leaped out.

* Fray Roman. *Hist. del Almirante.* P. Martyr, decad. i., lib. ix.

Upon this the cacique closed the gourd and placed it upon the top of his house, boasting that he had the sea shut up within it, and could have fish whenever he pleased. Four brothers, however, who had been born at the same birth and were curious intermeddlers, hearing of this gourd, came during the absence of the cacique to peep into it. In their carelessness they suffered it to fall upon the ground where it was dashed to pieces; when lo! to their astonishment and dismay, there issued forth a mighty flood with dolphins, and sharks, and tumbling porpoises, and great spouting whales; and the water spread, until it overflowed the earth and formed the ocean, leaving only the tops of the mountains uncovered, which are the present islands.*

They had singular modes of treating the dying and the dead. When the life of a cacique was despaired of, they strangled him out of a principle of respect, rather than suffer him to die like the vulgar. Common people were extended in their hammocks, bread and water placed at their head, and they were then abandoned to die in solitude. Sometimes they were carried to the cacique, and if he permitted them the distinction they were strangled. After death the body of a

* *Escritura de Fray Roman, pobre Heremito.*

cacique was opened, dried at a fire, and preserved; of others the head only was treasured up as a memorial, or occasionally a limb. Sometimes the whole body was interred in a cave, with a calabash of water, and a loaf of bread; sometimes it was consumed with fire in the house of the deceased.

They had confused and uncertain notions of the existence of the soul when separated from the body. They believed in the apparitions of the departed at night, or by daylight in solitary places, to lonely individuals; sometimes advancing as if to attack them, but upon the traveller's striking at them they vanished, and struck merely against trees or rocks. Sometimes they mingled among the living, and were only to be known by having no navels. The Indians, fearful of meeting with these apparitions, disliked to go about alone and in the dark.

They had an idea of a place of reward, to which the spirits of good men repaired after death, where they were reunited to the spirits of those they had most loved during life, and to all their ancestors. Here they enjoyed uninterruptedly, and in perfection, those pleasures which constituted their felicity on earth. They lived in shady and blooming bowers, with beautiful women, and banqueted on de-

licious fruits. The paradise of these happy spirits was variously placed, almost every tribe assigning some favorite spot in their native province. Many, however, concurred in describing this region as being near a lake in the western part of the island, in the beautiful province of Xaragua. Here there were many delightful valleys, covered with a delicate fruit called the *mamey*, about the size of an apricot. They imagined that the souls of the deceased remained concealed among the airy and inaccessible cliffs of the mountains during the day, but descended at night into these happy valleys, to regale on this consecrated fruit. The living were sparing, therefore, in eating it, lest the souls of their friends should suffer from want of their favorite nourishment.*

The dances to which the natives seemed so immoderately addicted, and which had been at first considered by the Spaniards mere idle pastimes, were found to be often ceremonials of a serious and mystic character. They form indeed a singular and important feature throughout the customs of the aboriginals of the New World. In these are typified, by signs well understood by the initiated, and as

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 61. Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. ix. Charlevoix, *Hist. St. Domingo*, lib. i.

it were by hieroglyphic action, their historical events, their projected enterprises, their hunting, their ambuscades, and their battles, resembling in some respects the Pyrrhic dances of the ancients. Speaking of the prevalence of these dances among the natives of Hayti, Peter Martyr observes that they performed them to the chant of certain metres and ballads, handed down from generation to generation, in which were rehearsed the deeds of their ancestors.

"These rhymes or ballads," he adds, "they call *areytos;* and as our minstrels are accustomed to sing to the harp and lute, so do they in like manner sing these songs, and dance to the same, playing on timbrels made of shells of certain fishes. These timbrels they call *maguey.* They have also songs and ballads of love, and others of lamentation or mourning; some also to encourage them to the wars, all sung to tunes agreeable to the matter."

It was for these dances, as has been already observed, that they were so eager to procure hawks'-bells, suspending them about their persons, and keeping time with their sound to the cadence of the singers. This mode of dancing to a ballad has been compared to the dances of the peasants in Flanders during the summer, and to those prevalent throughout Spain to the sound of the castanets, and the wild popular

chants said to be derived from the Moors; but which, in fact, existed before their invasion, among the Goths who overran the Peninsula.*

The earliest history of almost all nations has generally been preserved by rude heroic rhymes and ballads, and by the lays of the minstrels; and such was the case with the *areytos* of the Indians. "When a cacique died," says Oviedo, "they sang in dirges his life and actions, and all the good that he had done was recollected. Thus they formed the ballads or *areytos* which constituted their history."† Some of these ballads were of a sacred character, containing their traditional notions of theology, and the superstitions and fables which comprised their religious creeds. None were permitted to sing these but the sons of caciques, who were instructed in them by their *Butios*. They were chanted before the people on solemn festivals, like those already described, accompanied by the sound of a kind of drum, made from a hollow tree.‡

Such are a few of the characteristics remaining on record of these simple people, who per-

* Mariana, *Hist. Esp.*, lib. v., cap. 1.

† Oviedo, *Cron. de las Indias*, lib. v., cap. 1.

‡ Fray Roman. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 61. Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. ix. Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. iii., cap. 4. Oviedo, lib. v., cap. 1.

ished from the face of the earth before their customs and creeds were thought of sufficient importance to be investigated. The present work does not profess to enter into detailed accounts of the countries and people discovered by Columbus, otherwise than as they may be useful for the illustration of his history; and perhaps the foregoing are carried to an unnecessary length, but they may serve to give greater interest to the subsequent transactions of the island.

Many of these particulars, as has been observed, were collected by the Admiral and his officers, during their excursion among the mountains and their sojourn to the plain. The natives appeared to them a singularly idle and improvident race, indifferent to most of the objects of human anxiety and toil. They were impatient of all kinds of labor, scarcely giving themselves the trouble to cultivate the yucca root, the maize, and the potato, which formed the main articles of subsistence. For the rest, their streams abounded with fish; they caught the utia or coney, the guana, and various birds; and they had a perpetual banquet from the fruits spontaneously produced by their groves. Though the air was sometimes cold among the mountains, yet they preferred submitting to a little tem-

porary suffering, rather than take the trouble to weave garments from the gossampine cotton which abounded in their forests. Thus they loitered away existence in vacant inactivity, under the shade of their trees, or amusing themselves occasionally with various games and dances.

In fact they were destitute of powerful motive to toil, being free from most of those wants which doom mankind in civilized life, or in less genial climes, to incessant labor. They had no sterile winter to provide against, particularly in the valleys and plains, where, according to Peter Martyr, "the island enjoyed perpetual spring-time, and was blessed with continual summer and harvest. The trees preserved their leaves throughout the year, and the meadows continued always green."

"There is no province, nor any region," he again observes, "which is not remarkable for the majesty of its mountains, the fruitfulness of its vales, the pleasantness of its hills, and delightful plains, with abundance of fair rivers running through them. There never was any noisome animal found in it, nor yet any ravening four-footed beast; no lion, nor bear; no fierce tigers, nor crafty foxes, nor devouring wolves, but all things blessed and fortunate."*

* Peter Martyr, decad. iii., lib. ix., translated by R. Eden. London, 1555.

In the soft region of the Vega, the circling seasons brought each its store of fruits; and while some were gathered in full maturity, others were ripening on the boughs, and buds and blossoms gave promise of still future abundance. What need was there of garnering up and anxiously providing for coming days, to men who lived in a perpetual harvest? What need, too, of toilfully spinning or laboring at the loom, where a genial temperature prevailed throughout the year, and neither nature nor custom prescribed the necessity of clothing?

The hospitality which characterizes men in such a simple and easy mode of existence, was evinced towards Columbus and his followers during his sojourn in the Vega. Wherever they went it was a continual scene of festivity and rejoicing. The natives hastened from all parts, bearing presents, and laying the treasures of their groves and streams and mountains at the feet of beings whom they still considered as descended from the skies to bring blessings to their island.

Having accomplished the purposes of his residence in the Vega, Columbus, at the end of a few days, took leave of its hospitable inhabitants, and resumed his march for the harbor, returning with his little army through

the lofty and rugged gore of the mountains called the Pass of the Hidalgos. As we accompany him in imagination over the rocky height, whence the Vega first broke upon the eye of the Europeans, we cannot help pausing to cast back a look of mingled pity and admiration over this beautiful but devoted region. The dream of natural liberty, of ignorant content, and loitering idleness, was as yet unbroken, but the fiat had gone forth ; the white man had penetrated into the land ; avarice, and pride, and ambition, and pining care, and sordid labor, and withering poverty, were soon to follow, and the indolent paradise of the Indian was about to disappear forever.

Chapter XI.

ARRIVAL OF COLUMBUS AT ISABELLA—SICKNESS OF THE COLONY.

[1494.]

ON the 29th of March Columbus arrived at Isabella, highly satisfied with his expedition into the interior. The appearance of everything in the vicinity of the harbor was calculated to increase his anticipations of prosperity. The plants and fruits of the Old World, which he was endeavoring to introduce into the island, gave promise of rapid increase. The orchards, fields, and gardens, were in a great state of forwardness. The seeds of various fruits had produced young plants; the sugar-cane had prospered exceedingly; a native vine, trimmed and dressed with care, had yielded grapes of tolerable flavor, and cuttings from European vines had already begun to form their clusters. On the 30th of March a husbandman brought

to Columbus ears of wheat which had been sown in the latter part of January. The smaller kind of garden herbs came to maturity in sixteen days, and the larger kind, such as melons, gourds, pompions, and cucumbers, were fit for the table within a month after the seed had been put into the ground. The soil, moistened by brooks and rivers and frequent showers, and stimulated by an ardent sun, possessed those principles of quick and prodigal fecundity which surprise the stranger, accustomed to less vigorous climates.

The Admiral had scarcely returned to Isabella, when a messenger arrived from Pedro Margarite, the commander at Fort St. Thomas, informing him that the Indians of the vicinity had manifested unfriendly feelings, abandoning their villages, and shunning all intercourse with the white men; and that Caonabo was assembling his warriors and preparing to attack the fortress. The fact was, that the moment the Admiral had departed, the Spaniards, no longer awed by his presence, had as usual listened only to their passions, and exasperated the natives by wresting from them their gold, and wronging them with respect to their women. Caonabo also had seen with impatience these detested intruders planting their standard in the very midst of his moun-

tains, and he knew that he had nothing to expect from them but vengeance.

The tidings of Margarite however caused but little solicitude in the mind of Columbus. From what he had seen of the Indians in the interior, he had no apprehensions from their hostility. He knew their weakness and their awe of white men, and above all, he confided in their terror of the horses, which they regarded as ferocious beasts of prey, obedient to the Spaniards, but ready to devour their enemies. He contented himself therefore with sending Margarite a reinforcement of twenty men, with a supply of provisions and ammunition, and detaching thirty men to open a road between the fortress and the port.

What gave Columbus real and deep anxiety, was the sickness, the discontent, and dejection which continued to increase in the settlement. The same principles of heat and humidity which gave such fecundity to the fields, were fatal to the people. The exhalations from undrained marshes, and a vast continuity of forest, and the action of a burning sun upon reeking vegetable soil, produced intermittent fevers, and various other of the maladies so trying to European constitutions in the uncultivated countries of the tropics. Many of the Spaniards suffered also under the torments

of a disease hitherto unknown to them, the scourge, as was supposed, of their licentious intercourse with the Indian females; but the origin of which whether American or European, has been a subject of great dispute. Thus the greater part of the colonists were either confined by positive illness, or reduced to great debility. The stock of medicines was soon exhausted; there was a lack of medical aid, and of the watchful attendance which is even more important than medicine to the sick. Every one who was well, was either engrossed by the public labors, or by his own wants or cares, having to perform all menial offices for himself, even to the cooking of his provisions. The public works therefore languished, and it was impossible to cultivate the soil in a sufficient degree to produce a supply of the fruits of the earth. Provisions began to fail, much of the stores brought from Europe had been wasted on board ship or suffered to spoil through carelessness, and much had perished on shore from the warmth and humidity of the climate. It seemed impossible for the colonists to accommodate themselves to the food of the natives; and their infirm condition required the aliments to which they had been accustomed. To avert an absolute famine, therefore, it was necessary

to put the people on a short allowance even of the damaged and unhealthy provisions which remained. This immediately caused loud and factious murmurs, in which many of those in office, who ought to have supported Columbus in his measures for the common safety, took a leading part; among those was Father Boyle, a priest as turbulent as he was crafty. He had been irritated, it is said, by the rigid impartiality of Columbus, who, in enforcing his salutary measures, made no distinction of rank or persons, and put the friar and his household on a short allowance as well as the rest of the community.

In the midst of this general discontent the bread began to grow scarce. The stock of flour was exhausted, and there was no mode of grinding corn except by the tedious and toilsome process of the hand-mill. It became necessary therefore to erect a mill immediately, and other works were required equally important to the welfare of the settlement. Many of the workmen however were ill, some feigning greater illness than they really suffered; for there was a general disinclination to all kinds of labor which was not to produce immediate wealth. In this emergency Columbus put every healthy person in requisition, and as the cavaliers and gentlemen of rank required

food as well as the lower orders, they were called upon to take their share in the common labor. This was considered a cruel degradation by many youthful *hidalgos* of high blood and haughty spirit, and they refused to obey the summons. Columbus however was a strict disciplinarian, and felt the importance of making his authority respected. He resorted therefore to strong and compulsory measures, and enforced their obedience. This was another cause of the deep and lasting hostilities that sprang up against him. It aroused the immediate indignation of every person of birth and rank in the colony, and drew upon him the resentment of several of the proud families of Spain. He was inveighed against as an arrogant and upstart foreigner, who, inflated with a sudden acquisition of power, and consulting only his own wealth and aggrandizement, was trampling upon the rights and dignities of Spanish gentlemen, and insulting the honor of the nation.

Columbus may have been too strict and indiscriminate in his regulations. There are cases in which even justice may become oppressive, and where the severity of the law should be tempered with indulgence. What was mere toilsome labor to a common man, became humiliation and disgrace when forced

upon a Spanish cavalier. Many of these young men had come out, not in the pursuit of wealth, but with romantic dreams inspired by his own representations; hoping, no doubt, to distinguish themselves by heroic achievements and chivalrous adventure, and to continue in the Indies the career of arms which they had commenced in the recent wars of Granada. Others had been brought up in soft, luxurious indulgence, in the midst of opulent families, and were little calculated for the rude perils of the seas, the fatigues of the land, and the hardships, the exposures, and deprivations which attend a new settlement in the wilderness. When they fell ill their case soon became incurable. The ailments of the body were increased by sickness of the heart. They suffered under the irritation of wounded pride, and the morbid melancholy of disappointed hope; their sick-bed was destitute of all the tender care and soothing attention to which they had been accustomed; and they sank into the grave in all the sullenness of despair, cursing the day of their departure from their country.

The venerable Las Casas, and Herrera after him, record, with much solemnity, a popular belief current in the island at the time of his residence there, and connected with the untimely fate of these cavaliers.

In after years, when the seat of the colony was removed from Isabella on account of its unhealthy situation, the city fell to ruin and was abandoned. Like all decayed and deserted places it soon became an object of awe and superstition to the common people, and no one ventured to enter its gates. Those who passed near it, or hunted the wild swine which abounded in the neighborhood, declared they heard appalling voices issue from within its walls by night and day. The laborers became fearful, therefore, of cultivating the adjacent fields. The story went, adds Las Casas, that two Spaniards happened one day to wander among the ruined edifices of the place. On entering one of the solitary streets they beheld two rows of men, evidently, from their stately demeanor, *hidalgos* of noble blood, and cavaliers of the court. They were richly attired in the old Castilian mode, with rapiers by their sides, and broad travelling hats, such as were worn at the time. The two men were astonished to behold persons of their rank and appearance apparently inhabiting that desolate place unknown to the people of the island. They saluted them and inquired whence they came and when they had arrived. The cavaliers maintained a gloomy silence, but courteously returned the salutation by raising their

hands to their *sombreros* or hats, in taking off which their heads came off also, and their bodies stood decapitated. The whole phantom assemblage then vanished. So great was the astonishment and horror of the beholders that they had nearly fallen dead, and remained stupefied for several days.*

The foregoing legend is curious, as illustrating the superstitious character of the age, and especially of the people with whom Columbus had to act. It shows also the deep and gloomy impression made upon the minds of the common people by the death of these cavaliers, which operated materially to increase the unpopularity of Columbus ; as it was mischievously represented that they had been seduced from their homes by his delusive promises and sacrificed to his private interests.

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 92, MS. Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 12.

Chapter VII.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SPANISH FORCES IN THE INTERIOR—PREPARATIONS FOR A VOYAGE TO CUBA.

[1494.]

THE increasing discontents of the motley population of Isabella, and the rapid consumption of the scanty stores which remained, were causes of great anxiety to Columbus. He was desirous of proceeding on another voyage of discovery, but it was indispensable before sailing to place the affairs of the island in such a state as to secure tranquillity. He determined therefore to send all the men that could be spared from Isabella into the interior; with orders to visit the territories of the different caciques, and explore the island. By this means they would be roused and animated; they would become accustomed to the climate and to the diet of the natives, and such a force would be dis-

played as to overawe the machinations of Caonabo or any other hostile cacique. In pursuance of this plan, every healthy person not absolutely necessary to the concerns of the city or the care of the sick was put under arms, and a little army mustered, consisting of two hundred and fifty cross-bow men, one hundred and ten arquebusiers, sixteen horsemen, and twenty officers. The general command of the forces was intrusted to Pedro Margarite, in whom Columbus had great confidence as a noble Catalonian and a knight of the Order of Santiago. Alonso de Ojeda was to conduct the army to the fortress of St. Thomas, where he was to succeed Margarite in the command; and the latter was to proceed with the main body of the troops on a military tour, in which he was particularly to explore the province of Cibao, and subsequently the other parts of the island.

Columbus wrote a long and earnest letter of instructions to Margarite, by which to govern himself in a service requiring such great circumspection. He charged him above all things to observe the greatest justice and discretion in respect to the Indians, protecting them from all wrong and insult, and treating them in such a manner as to secure their confidence and friendship. At the same time they were

to be made to respect the property of the white men, and all thefts were to be severely punished. Whatever provisions were required from them for the subsistence of the army were to be fairly purchased by persons whom the Admiral appointed for that purpose; the purchases were to be made in the presence of the agent of the comptroller. If the Indians refused to sell the necessary provisions, then Margarite was to interfere and compel them to do so, acting, however, with all possible gentleness, and soothing them by kindness and caresses. No traffic was to be allowed between individuals and the natives, it being displeasing to the sovereigns and injurious to the service; and it was always to be kept in mind that their Majesties were more desirous of the conversion of the natives than of any riches to be derived from them.

A strict discipline was to be maintained in the army, all breach of orders to be severely punished, the men to be kept together and not suffered to wander from the main body either singly or in small parties, lest they should be cut off by the natives; for though these people were pusillanimous, there were no people so apt to be perfidious and cruel as cowards.*

* Letter of Columbus. Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom. ii., Document No. 72.

These judicious instructions, which, if followed, might have preserved an amicable intercourse with the natives, are more especially deserving of notice, because Margarite disregarded them all, and by his disobedience brought trouble on the colony, obloquy on the nation, destruction on the Indians, and unmerited censure on Columbus.

In addition to the foregoing orders, there were particular directions for the surprising and securing of the persons of Caonabo and his brothers. The warlike character of that chieftain, his artful policy, extensive power, and implacable hostility, rendered him a dangerous enemy. The measures proposed were not the most open and chivalrous, but Columbus thought himself justified in opposing stratagem to stratagem with a subtle and sanguinary foe.

The 9th of April Alonso de Ojeda sallied forth from Isabella at the head of the forces, amounting to nearly four hundred men. On arriving at the Rio del Oro in the Royal Vega, he learned that three Spaniards, coming from the fortress of St. Thomas, had been robbed of their effects by five Indians, whom a neighboring cacique had sent to assist them in fording the river; and the cacique, instead of punishing the thieves, had countenanced them

and shared their booty. Ojeda was a quick, impetuous soldier, whose ideas of legislation were all of a military kind. Having caught one of the thieves he caused his ears to be cut off in the public square of the village; he then seized the cacique, his son, and nephew, and sent them in chains to the Admiral, after which he pursued his march to the fortress.

In the meantime the prisoners arrived at Isabella in deep dejection. They were accompanied by a neighboring cacique, who relying upon the merit of various acts of kindness which he had shown to the Spaniards, came to plead for their forgiveness. His intercessions appeared to be of no avail. Columbus felt the importance of striking awe into the minds of the natives with respect to the property of the white men. He ordered therefore that the prisoners should be taken to the public square with their hands tied behind them, their crime and punishment proclaimed by the public crier, and their heads struck off. Nor was this a punishment disproportioned to their own ideas of justice, for we are told that the crime of theft was held in such abhorrence among them, that, though not otherwise sanguinary in their laws, they punished it with impalement.* It is not probable however that

* Oviedo, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. v., cap. 3.

Columbus really meant to carry the sentence into effect. At the place of execution the prayers and tears of the friendly cacique were redoubled, pledging himself that there should be no repetition of the offence. The Admiral at length made a merit of yielding to his entreaties and released the prisoners. Just at this juncture a horseman arrived from the fortress, who, in passing by the village of the captive cacique, had found five Spaniards in the power of the Indians. The sight of his horse had put the multitude to flight, though upwards of four hundred in number. He had pursued the fugitives, wounding several with his lance, and had brought off his countrymen in triumph.

Convinced by this circumstance that nothing was to be apprehended from the hostilities of these timid people as long as his orders were obeyed, and confiding in the distribution he had made of his forces, both for the tranquillity of the colony and the island, Columbus prepared to depart on the prosecution of his discoveries. To direct the affairs of the island during his absence he formed a *junta*, of which his brother Don Diego was president, and Father Boyle, Pedro Fernandez Coronel, Alonzo Sanchez Caravajal, and Juan de Luxan, were councillors. He left his two largest ships in

the harbor, being of too great a size and draft of water to explore unknown coasts and rivers, and took with him three caravels, the *Niña* or *Santa Clara*, the *San Juan*, and the *Cordera*.

Book VII.

Chapter II.

VOYAGE TO THE EAST END OF CUBA.

[1494.]

THE expedition of Columbus, which we are now about to record, may appear of minor importance at the present day, leading as it did to no grand discovery, and merely extending along the coasts of islands with which the reader is sufficiently familiar. Some may feel impatient at the development of opinions and conjectures which have long since been proved to be fallacious, and the detail of exploring enterprises undertaken in error, and which they know must end in disappointment. But to feel these voyages properly, we must, in a manner, divest ourselves occasionally of the information we possess relative to the countries visited; we must transport ourselves to the time, and identify ourselves with Columbus, thus fearlessly

launching into seas where as yet a civilized sail had never been unfurled. We must accompany him, step by step, in his cautious but bold advances along the bays and channels of an unknown coast, ignorant of the dangers which might lurk around, or which might await him in the interminable region of mystery that still kept waiting upon his view. We must, as it were, consult with him as to each new reach of shadowy land, and long line of promontory, that we see faintly emerging from the ocean and stretching along the distant horizon. We must watch with him each light canoe that comes skimming the billows, to gather from the looks, the ornaments, and the imperfect communications of its wandering crew, whether those unknown lands are also savage and uncultivated, whether they are islands in the ocean, untrodden as yet by uncivilized man, or tracts of the old continent of Asia, and wild frontiers of its populous and splendid empires. We must enter into his very thoughts and fancies, find out the data that assisted his judgment, and the hints that excited his conjectures, and, for a time, clothe the regions through which we are accompanying him, with the gorgeous coloring of his own imagination. In this way we may delude ourselves into participation of the delight of ex-

ploring unknown and magnificent lands, where new wonders and beauties break upon us at every step, and we may ultimately be able, as it were from our own familiar acquaintance, to form an opinion of the character of this extraordinary man, and of the nature of his enterprise.

The plan of the present expedition of Columbus was to revisit the coast of Cuba at the point where he had abandoned it on his first voyage, and thence to explore it on the southern side. As has already been observed he supposed it to be a continent, and the extreme end of Asia, and if so, by following its shores in the proposed direction he must eventually arrive at Cathay and those other rich and commercial, though semi-barbarous countries described by Mandeville and Marco Polo.*

He set sail with his little squadron from the harbor of Isabella on the 24th of April, and steered to the westward. After touching at Monte Christi he anchored on the same day at the disastrous harbor of La Navidad. His object in revisiting this melancholy scene was to obtain an interview with Guacanagari, who, he understood, had returned to his former residence. He could not be persuaded of the perfidy of that cacique, so deep was the impression

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 123, MS.

made upon his heart by past kindness; he trusted therefore that a frank explanation would remove all painful doubts, and restore a friendly intercourse which would be highly advantageous to the Spaniards, in their present time of scarcity and suffering. Guacanagari however still maintained his equivocal conduct, absconding at the sight of the ships; and although several of his subjects assured Columbus that the Cacique would soon make him a visit, he did not think it advisable to delay his voyage on such an uncertainty.

Pursuing his course, impeded occasionally by contrary winds, he arrived on the 29th at the port of St. Nicholas, whence he beheld the extreme point of Cuba, to which in his preceding voyage he had given the name of Alpha and Omega, but which was called by the natives Bayatiquiri, and is now known as Point Maysi. Having crossed the channel, which is about eighteen leagues wide, he sailed along the southern coast of Cuba for the distance of twenty leagues, when he anchored in a harbor, to which, from its size, he gave the name of Puerto Grande, at present called Guantanamo. The entrance was narrow and winding, though deep; the harbor expanded within like a beautiful lake, in the bosom of a wild and mountainous country covered with trees,

some of them in blossom, others bearing fruit. Not far from the shore were two cottages built of reeds, and several fires blazing in various parts of the beach gave signs of inhabitants. Columbus landed therefore, attended by several men well armed, and by the young Indian interpreter Diego Colon, the native of the island of Guanahani, who had been baptized in Spain. On arriving at the cottages he found them deserted; the fires also were abandoned, and there was not a human being to be seen. The Indians had all fled to the woods and mountains. The sudden arrival of the ships had spread a panic throughout the neighborhood, and apparently interrupted the preparation of a rude but plentiful banquet. There were great quantities of fish, utias, and guanas; some suspended to the branches of the trees, others roasting on wooden spits before the fires.

The Spaniards, accustomed of late to slender fare, fell without ceremony on this bounteous feast, thus spread before them, as it were, in the wilderness. They abstained however from the guanas, which they still regarded with disgust as a species of serpent, though they were considered so delicate a food by the savages, that, according to Peter Martyr, it was no more lawful for the common people to eat

them, than of peacocks and pheasants in Spain.*

After their repast, as the Spaniards were roving about the vicinity, they beheld about seventy of the natives collected on the top of a lofty rock, and looking down upon them with great awe and amazement. On attempting to approach them they instantly disappeared among the woods and clefts of the mountain. One, however, more bold or more curious than the rest, lingered on the brow of the precipice, gazing with timid wonder at the Spaniards, partly encouraged by their friendly signs, but ready in an instant to bound away after his companions.

By order of Columbus, the young Lucayan interpreter advanced and accosted him. The expressions of friendship, in his own language, soon dispelled his apprehensions. He came to meet the interpreter, and being informed by him of the good intentions of the Spaniards, hastened to communicate the intelligence to his comrades. In a little while they were seen descending from the rocks, and issuing from their forests, approaching the strangers with great gentleness and veneration. Through the means of the interpreter Columbus learned that they had been sent to the coast by their

*P. Martyr, decad. i., lib. iii.

cacique, to procure fish for a solemn banquet, which he was about to give to a neighboring chieftain, and that they roasted the fish to prevent it from spoiling in the transportation. They seemed to be of the same gentle and pacific character with the natives of Hayti. The ravages that had been made among their provisions by the hungry Spaniards gave them no concern, for they observed that one night's fishing would replace all the loss. Columbus, however, in his usual spirit of justice, ordered that ample compensation should be made them, and, shaking hands, they parted mutually well pleased.*

Leaving this harbor on the 1st of May, the Admiral continued to the westward, along a mountainous coast, adorned by beautiful rivers, and indented by those commodious harbors for which this island is so remarkable. As he advanced, the country grew more fertile and populous. The natives crowded to the shores, man, woman, and child, gazing with astonishment at the ships, which glided gently along at no great distance. They held up fruits and provisions, inviting the Spaniards to land; others came off in canoes, bringing cassava bread, fish, and calabashes of water, not for sale, but as offerings to the strangers, whom,

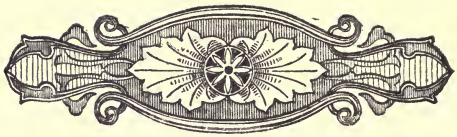
* Peter Martyr, *ubi sup.*

as usual, they considered celestial beings descended from the skies. Columbus distributed the customary presents among them, which were received with transports of joy and gratitude. After continuing some distance along the coast he came to another gulf or deep bay, narrow at the entrance and expanding within, surrounded by a rich and beautiful country. There were lofty mountains sweeping up from the sea, but the shores were enlivened by numerous villages, and cultivated to such a degree as to resemble gardens and orchards. In this harbor, which it is probable was the same at present called St. Jago de Cuba, Columbus anchored and passed a night, overwhelmed, as usual, with the simple hospitality of the natives.*

On inquiring of the people of this coast after gold they uniformly pointed to the south, and as far as they could be understood, intimated that it abounded in a great island which lay in that direction. The Admiral, in the course of his first voyage, had received information of such an island, which some of his followers had thought might be Babeque, the object of so much anxious search and chimerical expectation. He had felt a strong inclination to diverge from his course and go in quest of it,

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 124, MS.

and this desire increased with every new report. On the following day, therefore (the 3d of May), after standing westward to a high cape, he turned his prow directly south, and abandoning for a time the coast of Cuba, steered off into the broad sea, in quest of this reported island.



Chapter III.

DISCOVERY OF JAMAICA.

[1494.]

COLUMBUS had not sailed many leagues before the blue summits of a vast and lofty island, at a great distance, began to rise like clouds above the horizon. It was two days and nights however before he reached its shores, filled with admiration, as he gradually drew near, at the beauty of its mountains, the majesty of its forests, the fertility of its valleys, and the great number of villages with which the whole face of the country was animated.

On approaching the land at least seventy canoes, filled with savages gayly painted and decorated with feathers, sallied forth more than a league from the shore. They advanced in warlike array, uttering loud yells, and brandishing lances of pointed wood. The media-

tion of the interpreter, and a few presents to the crew of one of the canoes, which ventured nearer than the rest, soothed this angry *armada*, and the squadron pursued its course unmolested. Columbus anchored in a harbor about the centre of the island, to which, from the great beauty of the surrounding country, he gave the name of Santa Gloria.*

On the following morning he weighed anchor at daybreak and coasted westward in search of a sheltered harbor, where his ship could be careened and calked, as it leaked considerably. After proceeding a few leagues he found one apparently suitable for the purpose. On sending a boat to sound the entrance, two large canoes, filled with Indians, issued forth, hurling their lances, but from such distance as to fall short of the Spaniards. Wishing to avoid any act of hostility that might prevent future intercourse Columbus ordered the boat to return on board, and finding there was sufficient depth of water for his ship, entered and anchored in the harbor. Immediately the whole beach was covered with Indians painted with a variety of colors, but chiefly black, some partly clothed with palm leaves, and all wearing tufts and coronets of feathers. Unlike the hospitable islanders of Cuba and Hayti

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 125.

they appeared to partake of the warlike character of the Caribs, hurling their javelins at the ships, and making the shores resound with their yells and war-whoops.

The Admiral reflected that further forbearance might be mistaken for cowardice. It was necessary to careen his ship, and to send men on shore for a supply of water, but previously it was advisable to strike an awe into the savages that might prevent any molestation from them. As the caravels could not approach sufficiently near to the beach where the Indians were collected, he despatched the boats well manned and armed. These, rowing close to the shore, let fly a volley of arrows from their cross-bows, by which several Indians were wounded and the rest thrown into confusion. The Spaniards then sprang on shore and put the whole multitude to flight, giving another discharge with their cross-bows, and letting loose upon them a dog, who pursued them with sanguinary fury.* This is the first instance of the use of dogs against the natives, which were afterward employed with such cruel effect by the Spaniards in their Indian wars. Columbus now landed and took formal possession of the island, to which he gave the name

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 125.

of Santiago, but it has retained its original Indian name of Jamaica. The harbor, from its commodiousness, he called Puerto Bueno; it was in the form of a horse-shoe, and a river entered the sea in its vicinity.*

During the rest of the day the neighborhood remained silent and deserted. On the following morning, however, before sunrise, six Indians were seen on the shore making signs of amity. They proved to be envoys sent by the caciques with proffers of peace and friendship. These were cordially returned by the Admiral; presents of trinkets were sent to the chieftains; and in a little while the harbor again swarmed with the naked and painted multitude, bringing abundance of provisions similar in kind but superior in quality to those of the other islands.

During three days that the ships remained in this harbor the most amicable intercourse was kept up with the natives. They appeared to be more ingenious as well as more warlike than their neighbors of Cuba and Hayti. Their canoes were better constructed, being ornamented with carving and painting at the bow and stern. Many were of great size, though formed of the trunks of single trees, often from a species of the mahogany. Co-

* *Hist. del Almirante, ubi sup.*

lumbus measured one, which was ninety-six feet long and eight broad,* hollowed out of those magnificent trees which rise like verdant towers amid the rich forests of the tropics. Every cacique prided himself on possessing a large canoe of the kind, which he seemed to regard as his ship of state. It is curious to remark the apparently innate difference between these island tribes. The natives of Porto Rico, though surrounded by adjacent islands and subject to frequent incursions of the Caribs, were of a pacific character, and possessed very few canoes; while Jamaica, separated by distance from intercourse with other islands, protected in the same way from the dangers of invasion, and embosomed as it were in a peaceful, mediterranean sea, was inhabited by a warlike race, and surpassed all the other islands in its maritime armaments.

His ship being repaired and a supply of water taken in, Columbus made sail, and continued along the coast to the westward, so close to the shore that the little squadron was continually surrounded by the canoes of the natives, who came off from every bay, and river, and headland, no longer manifesting hostility, but anxious to exchange anything they possessed for European trifles. After

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 124.

proceeding about twenty-four leagues they approached the western extremity of the island, where the coast bending to the south, the wind became unfavorable for their farther progress along the shore. Being disappointed in his hopes of finding gold in Jamaica, and the breeze being fair for Cuba, Columbus determined to return thither, and not to leave it until he had explored its coast to a sufficient distance to determine the question whether it were *terra firma* or an island.* To the last place at which he touched in Jamaica he gave the name of the Gulf of Buentiempo (or Fair Weather), on account of the propitious wind which blew for Cuba. Just as he was about to sail a young Indian came off to the ship and begged the Spaniards would take him to their country. He was followed by his relatives and friends, who endeavored by the most affecting supplications to dissuade him from his purpose. For some time he was distracted between concern for the distress of his family and an ardent desire to see the home of these wonderful strangers. Curiosity and the youthful propensity to rove prevailed; he tore himself from the embraces of his friends, and, that he might not behold the tears of his sisters, hid himself in a secret part of the ship.

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 54.

Touched by this scene of natural affection, and pleased with the enterprising and confiding spirit of the youth, Columbus gave orders that he should be treated with especial kindness.*

It would have been interesting to have known something more of the fortunes of this curious savage, and of the impressions made upon so lively a mind by a first sight of the wonders of civilization—whether the land of the white man equalled his hopes; whether, as is usual with the savages, he pined amidst the splendors of cities for his native forests, and whether he returned to the arms of his family. The early Spanish historians seem never to have interested themselves in the feelings or fortunes of these first visitors from the New to the Old World. No further mention is made of this youthful adventurer.

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 54.

Chapter III.

RETURN TO CUBA—NAVIGATION AMONG THE ISLANDS CALLED THE QUEEN'S GARDENS.

[1494.]

SETTING sail from the gulf of Buentiempo, the squadron once more steered for the island of Cuba, and on the 18th of May arrived at a great cape, to which Columbus gave the name of Cabo de la Cruz, which it still retains. Here, landing at a large village, he was well received and entertained by the cacique and his subjects, who had long since heard of him and his ships. In fact, Columbus found from the report of this chieftain, that the numerous Indians who had visited his ships during the cruise along the northern coast in his first voyage, had spread the story far and near of these wonderful visitors who had descended from the sky, and had filled the whole island with rumors and astonishment.* The Admiral endeavored to

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 126.

ascertain from this cacique and his people, whether Cuba was an island or a continent. They all replied that it was an island, but of infinite extent; for they declared that no one had ever seen the end of it. This reply, while it manifested their ignorance of the nature of a continent, left the question still in doubt and obscurity. The Indian name of this province of Cuba was Macaca.

Resuming his course to the west on the following day Columbus came to where the coast suddenly swept away to the northeast for many leagues, and then curved around again to the west, forming an immense bay, or rather gulf. Here he was assailed by a violent storm, accompanied by awful thunder and lightning, which in these latitudes seem to rend the very heavens. Fortunately the storm was not of long duration, or his situation would have been perilous in the extreme; for he found the navigation rendered difficult by numerous keys* and sand-banks. These increased as he advanced, until the mariner stationed at the mast-head, beheld the sea, as far as the eye could reach, completely studded with small islands; some were low, naked, and sandy, others covered with verdure, and others tufted

* Keys, from *cayos*, rocks which occasionally form small islands on the coast of America.

with lofty and beautiful forests. They were of various sizes, from one to four leagues, and were generally the more fertile and elevated, the nearer they were to Cuba. Finding them to increase in number, so as to render it impossible to give names to each, the Admiral gave the whole labyrinth of islands, which in a manner enamelled the face of the ocean with variegated verdure, the name of the Queen's Gardens. He thought at first of leaving this archipelago on his right, and standing farther out to sea ; but he called to mind that Sir John Mandeville and Marco Polo had mentioned that the coast of Asia was fringed with islands to the amount of several thousand. He persuaded himself that he was among that cluster, and resolved not to lose sight of the mainland, by following which, if it were really Asia, he must soon arrive at the dominions of the Grand Khan.

Entering among these islands, therefore, Columbus soon became entangled in the most perplexed navigation, in which he was exposed to continual perils and difficulties from sand-banks, counter currents, and sunken rocks. The ships were compelled, in a manner, to grope their way, with men stationed at the mast-head, and the lead continually going. Sometimes they were obliged to shift their

course, within the hour, to all points of the compass; sometimes they were straitened in a narrow channel, where it was necessary to lower all sail, and tow the vessels out, lest they should run aground; notwithstanding all which precautions they frequently touched upon sand-banks, and were extricated with great difficulty. The variableness of the weather added to the embarrassment of the navigation; though after a little while it began to assume some method in its very caprices. In the morning the wind rose in the east with the sun, and following his course through the day, died away at sunset in the west. Heavy clouds gathered with the approach of evening, sending forth sheets of lightning, and distant peals of thunder, and menacing a furious tempest; but as the moon rose, the whole mass broke away, part melting in a shower, and part dispersing by a breeze which sprang up from the land.

There was much in the character of the surrounding scenery to favor the idea of Columbus, that he was in the Asiatic archipelago. As the ships glided along the smooth and glassy canals which separated these verdant islands, the magnificence of their vegetation, the soft odors wafted from flowers, and blossoms, and aromatic shrubs, and the splendid

plumage of the scarlet cranes, or rather flamingoes, which abounded in the meadows, and of other tropical birds which fluttered among the groves, resembled what is described of Oriental climes.

These islands were generally uninhabited. They found a considerable village, however, on one of the largest, where they landed on the 22d of May. The houses were abandoned by their inhabitants, who appeared to depend principally on the sea for their subsistence. Large quantities of fish were found in their dwellings, and the adjacent shore was covered with the shells of tortoises. There were also domesticated parrots, and scarlet cranes, and a number of dumb dogs, which it was afterwards found they fattened as an article of food. To this island the Admiral gave the name of Santa Marta.

In the course of his voyage among these islands, Columbus beheld one day a number of the natives in a canoe on the still surface of one of the channels, occupied in fishing, and was struck with the singular means they employed. They had a small fish, the flat head of which was furnished with numerous suckers by which it attached itself so firmly to any objects as to be torn in pieces rather than abandon its hold. Tying a line of great length

to the tail of this fish, the Indians permitted it to swim at large; it generally kept near the surface of the water until it perceived its prey, when, darting down swiftly, it attached itself by the suckers to the throat of a fish or to the under shell of a tortoise, nor did it relinquish its prey, until both were drawn up by the fishermen and taken out of the water. In this way the Spaniards witnessed the taking of a tortoise of immense size, and Fernando Columbus affirms that he himself saw a shark caught in the same manner on the coast of Veragua. The fact has been corroborated by the accounts of various navigators; and the same mode of fishing is said to be employed on the eastern coast of Africa, at Mozambique and Madagascar. "Thus," it has been observed, "savage people, who probably have never held communication with each other, offer the most striking analogies in their modes of exercising empire over animals."* These fishermen came on board of the ships in a fearless manner. They furnished the Spaniards with a supply of fish, and would cheerfully have given them everything they possessed. To the Admiral's inquiries concerning those parts, they said the sea was full of islands, to the south

* Humboldt, *Essai Politique sur l'Ile de Cuba*, tom. i., p. 364.

and to the west, but as to Cuba, it continued running to the westward without any termination.

Having extricated himself from this archipelago, Columbus steered for a mountainous part of the island of Cuba about fourteen leagues distant, where he landed at a large village on the 3d of June. Here he was received with that kindness and amity which distinguished the inhabitants of Cuba, whom he extolled above all the other islanders for their mild and pacific character. Their very animals, he said, were tamer, as well as larger and better, than those of the other islands. Among the various articles of food which the natives brought with joyful alacrity from all parts, were stockdoves of uncommon size and flavor; perceiving something peculiar in their taste, Columbus ordered the crops of several newly killed to be opened, in which were found sweet spices.

While the crews of the boats were procuring water and provisions, Columbus sought to gather information from the venerable cacique, and several of the old men of the village. They told him that the name of their province was Ornofay; that farther to the westward the sea was again covered with innumerable islands and had but little depth. As to Cuba, none of them had ever heard that it had an end to the westward; forty moons would not suffice to

reach to its extremity ; in fact they considered it interminable. They observed however that the Admiral would receive more ample information from the inhabitants of Mangon, an adjacent province, which lay towards the west. The quick apprehension of Columbus was struck with the sound of this name ; it resembled that of Mangi, the richest province of the Grand Khan, bordering on the ocean. He made further inquiries concerning the region of Mangon, and understood the Indians to say, that it was inhabited by people who had tails like animals, and wore garments to conceal them. He recollected that Sir John Mandeville, in his account of the remote parts of the East, had recorded a story of the same kind as current among certain naked tribes of Asia, and told by them in ridicule of the garments of their civilized neighbors, which they could only conceive useful as concealing some bodily defect.* He became, therefore, more confident than ever, that by keeping along the coast to the westward, he should eventually arrive at the civilized realms of Asia. He flattered himself with the hopes of finding this region of Mangon to be the rich province of Mangi, and its people with tails and garments, the long-robed inhabitants of the empire of Tartary.

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 127.

Chapter IV.

COASTING OFF THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF CUBA.

[1494.]

ANIMATED by one of the pleasing illusions of his ardent imagination, Columbus pursued his voyage, with a prosperous breeze, along the supposed continent of Asia. He was now opposite that part of the southern side of Cuba where, for nearly thirty-five leagues, the navigation is unembarrassed by banks and islands. To his left was the broad and open sea, the dark-blue color of which gave token of ample depth; to his right extended the richly wooded province of Ornofay, gradually sweeping up into a range of interior mountains; the verdant coast watered by innumerable streams and studded with Indian villages. The appearance of the ships spread wonder and joy along the sea-coast. The natives hailed

with acclamations the arrival of these wonderful beings, whose fame had circulated more or less throughout the island, and who brought with them the blessings of Heaven. They came off swimming, or in their canoes, to offer the fruits and productions of the land, and regarded the white men almost with adoration. After the usual evening shower, when the breeze blew from the shore and brought off the sweetness of the land, it bore with it also the distant songs of the natives and the sound of their rude music, as they were probably celebrating with their national chants and dances, the arrival of the white men. So delightful were these spicy odors and cheerful sounds to Columbus, who was at present open to all pleasurable influences, that he declared the night passed away as a single hour.*

It was impossible to resist noticing the striking contrasts which are sometimes presented by the lapse of time. The coast here described, so populous and animated, rejoicing in the visit of the discoverers, is the same that extends westward of the city of Trinidad, along the gulf of Xagua. All is now silent and deserted; civilization, which has covered some parts of Cuba with glittering cities, has

* Cura de los Palacios.

rendered this a solitude. The whole race of Indians has long since passed away, pining and perishing beneath the domination of the strangers whom they welcomed so joyfully to their shores. Before me lies the account of a night recently passed on this very coast by a celebrated traveller; but with what different feelings from those of Columbus!

"I passed," says he, "a great part of the night upon the deck. What deserted coasts! not a light to announce the cabin of a fisherman. From Batabano to Trinidad, a distance of fifty leagues, there does not exist a village. Yet in the time of Columbus this land was inhabited even along the margin of the sea. When pits are digged in the soil, or the torrents plough open the surface of the earth, there are often found hatchets of stone and vessels of copper, relics of the ancient inhabitants of the island." *

For the greater part of two days the ships swept along this open part of the coast, traversing the wide gulf of Xagua. At length they came to where the sea became suddenly as white as milk, and perfectly turbid, as though flour had been mingled with it. This is caused by fine sand or calcareous particles, raised from the bottom at certain depths by the agitation of the waves and currents. It spread great alarm through the ships, which was heightened

* Humboldt, *Essai Pol. sur Cuba*, tom. ii., p. 25.

by their soon finding themselves surrounded by banks and keys, and in shallow water. The farther they proceeded the more perilous became their situation. They were in a narrow channel, where they had no room to turn and to beat out, where there was no hold for their anchors, and where they were violently tossed about by the winds and in danger of being stranded. At length they came to a small island, where they found tolerable anchorage. Here they remained for the night in great anxiety; many were for abandoning all further prosecution of the enterprise, thinking that they might esteem themselves fortunate should they be able to return whence they came. Columbus however could not consent to relinquish his voyage, now that he thought himself in the route for a brilliant discovery. The next morning he despatched the smallest caravel to explore this new labyrinth of islands, and to penetrate to the mainland in quest of fresh water, of which the ships were in great need. The caravel returned with a report that the canals and keys of this group were as numerous and intricate as those of the Gardens of the Queen; that the mainland was bordered by deep marshes and a muddy coast, where the mangrove trees grow within the water, and so close together that they formed as it

were an impenetrable wall; that within, the land appeared fertile and mountainous; and columns of smoke, rising from various parts, gave signs of numerous inhabitants.* Under the guidance of this caravel Columbus now ventured to penetrate this little archipelago; working his way with great caution, toil, and peril, among the narrow channels which separated the sand-banks and islands, and frequently getting aground. At length he reached a low point of Cuba, to which he gave the name of Point Serafin, within which the coast swept off to the east, forming so deep a bay that he could not see the land at the bottom. To the north however there were mountains afar off, and the intermediate space was clear and open, the islands in sight lying to the south and west: a description which agrees with that of the great bay of Batabano. Columbus now steered for these mountains, with a fair wind and three fathoms of water, and on the following day anchored on the coast near a beautiful grove of palm-trees.

Here a party was sent on shore for wood and water, and they found two living springs in the midst of the grove. While they were employed in cutting wood and filling their water-casks, an archer strayed into the forest

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 128.

with his cross-bow in search of game, but soon returned, flying with great terror and calling loudly upon his companions for aid. He declared that he had not proceeded far when he suddenly espied, through an opening glade, a man in a long white dress, so like a friar of the order of St. Mary of Mercy that at first sight he took him for the chaplain of the Admiral. Two others followed, in white tunics reaching to their knees, and three were of as fair complexions as Europeans. Behind these appeared many more to the number of thirty armed with clubs and lances. They made no signs of hostility but remained quiet, the man in the long white dress alone advancing to accost him ; but he was so alarmed at their number that he had fled instantly to seek the aid of his companions. The latter, however, were so daunted by the reported number of armed natives, that they had not courage to seek them nor to wait their coming but hurried with all speed to the ships.

When Columbus heard this story he was greatly rejoiced, for he concluded that these must be the clothed inhabitants of Mangon, of whom he had recently heard, and that he had at length arrived at the confines of a civilized country, if not within the very borders of the rich province of Mangi. On the following

day he despatched a party of armed men in quest of these people clad in white, with orders to penetrate if necessary forty miles into the interior, until they met with some of the inhabitants; for he thought the populous and cultivated parts might be distant from the sea, and there might be towns and cities beyond the woods and mountains of the coast. They penetrated through a belt of thick forests which girdled the shore, and then entered upon a great plain or savanna, covered with rank grass and herbage as tall as ripe corn, and destitute of any road or footpath. Here they were so entangled and fettered as it were by matted grass and creeping vegetation, that it was with the utmost difficulty they could penetrate the distance of a mile, when they had to abandon the attempt, and return, weary and exhausted, to the ships.

Another party was sent on the succeeding day to penetrate in a different direction. They had not proceeded far from the coast when they beheld the footprints of some large animal with claws, which some supposed the tracks of a lion, others of a griffon,* but

* Cardinal Pierre de Aliaco, a favorite author with Columbus, speaks repeatedly, in his *Imago Mundi*, of the existence of griffons in India; and Glanville, whose work, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, was familiar

which were probably made by the alligators which abound in that vicinity. Dismayed at the sight they hastened back toward the seaside. In their way they passed through a forest with lawns and meadows opening in various parts of it, in which were flocks of cranes twice the size of those of Europe. Many of the trees and shrubs sent forth those aromatic odors which were continually deceiving them with the hopes of finding Oriental spices. They saw also abundance of grapevines, that beautiful feature in the vegetation of the New World. Many of these crept to the summits of the highest trees, overwhelming them with foliage, twisting themselves from branch to branch, and bearing ponderous clusters of juicy grapes. The party returned to the ships unsuccessful as their predecessors, and pronounced the country wild and impenetrable, though exceedingly fertile. As a proof of its abundance they brought great clusters of the wild grapes, which Columbus afterwards transmitted to the sovereigns, to-

to Columbus, describes them as having the body and claws of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle, and as infesting the mountains which abounded with gold and precious stones, so as to render the access to them extremely perilous.—*De Proprietatibus Rerum*, lib. xviii., cap. 150.

gether with a specimen of the water of the White Sea, through which he had passed.

As no tribe of Indians were ever discovered in Cuba wearing clothing, it is probable that the story of the men in white originated in some error of the archer, who, full of the idea of the mysterious inhabitants of Mangon, may have been startled in the course of his lonely wanderings in the forest, by one of those flocks of cranes which it seems abounded in the neighborhood. These birds, like the flamingoes, feed in company, with one stationed at a distance as sentinel. When seen through the openings of the woodlands, standing in rows along a smooth savanna or in a glassy pool of water, their height and erectness give them at the first glance the semblance of human figures. Whether the story originated in error or in falsehood it made a deep impression on the mind of Columbus, who was predisposed to be deceived, and to believe everything that favored the illusion of his being in the vicinity of a civilized country.

After he had explored the deep bay to the east and ascertained that it was not an arm of the sea, he continued westward, and proceeding about nine leagues came to an inhabited shore, where he had communications with

several of the natives. They were naked as usual; but that he attributed to their being mere fishermen, inhabiting a savage coast; he presumed the civilized regions to lie in the interior. As his Lucayan interpreter did not understand the language, or rather dialect, of this part of Cuba, all the information which he could obtain from the natives was necessarily received through the erroneous medium of signs and gesticulations. Deluded by his own favorite hypothesis he understood from them that, among certain mountains which he saw far off to the west, there was a powerful king, who reigned in great state over many populous provinces; that he wore a white garment which swept the ground; that he was called a saint*; that he never spoke, but communicated his orders to his subjects by signs, which were implicitly obeyed.† In all this we see the busy imagination of the Admiral interpreting everything into unison with his preconceived ideas. Las Casas assures us that there was no cacique ever known in the island who wore garments, or answered in other respects to this description. This king

* "Que le Llamaban santo e que traia tunica blanca que le arastra por el suelo."— Cura de los Palacios, cap. 128.

† Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 14.

with a saintly title was probably nothing more than a reflected image haunting the mind of Columbus, of that mysterious potentate, Prester John, who had long figured in the narrations of all eastern travellers, sometimes as a monarch, sometimes as a priest, the situation of whose empire and court was always a matter of doubt and contradiction and had recently become again an object of curious inquiry.

The information derived from these people concerning the coast to the westward was entirely vague. They said that it continued for at least twenty days' journey, but whether it terminated there they did not know. They appeared but little informed of anything out of their immediate neighborhood. Taking an Indian from this place as a guide Columbus steered for the distant mountains, said to be inhabited by this cacique in white raiment, hoping they might prove the confines of a more civilized country. He had not gone far before he was involved in the usual perplexities of keys, shelves, and sand-banks. The vessels frequently stirred up the sand and slime from the bottom of the sea; at other times they were almost imbedded in narrow channels, where there was no room to tack, and it was necessary to haul them forward by

means of the capstan, to their great injury. At one time they came to where the sea was almost covered with tortoises; at another time flights of cormorants and wood-pigeons darkened the sun, and one day the whole air was filled with clouds of gaudy butterflies, until dispelled by the evening shower.

When they approached the mountainous regions they found the coast bordered by drowned lands or morasses; and beset by such thick forests that it was impossible to penetrate to the interior. They were several days seeking fresh water, of which they were in great want. At length they found a spring in a grove of palm-trees and near it shells of the pearl oyster, from which Columbus thought there might be a valuable pearl fishery in the neighborhood.

While thus cut off from all intercourse with the interior by a belt of swamp and forests, the country appeared to be well peopled. Columns of smoke ascended from various parts, which grew more frequent as the vessels advanced, until they rose from every rock and woody height. The Spaniards were at a loss to determine whether these arose from villages and towns, or whether from signal-fires, to give notice of the approach of the ships and to alarm the country; such as were usual on

European seashores, when an enemy was descried hovering in the vicinity.

For several days Columbus continued exploring this perplexed and lonely coast, whose intricate channels are seldom visited, even at the present day, excepting by the solitary and lurking bark of the smuggler. As he proceeded, however, he found that the coast took a general bend to the southwest. This accorded precisely with the descriptions given by Marco Polo of the remote coast of Asia. He now became fully assured that he was on that part of the Asiatic continent which is beyond the boundaries of the Old World as laid down by Ptolemy. Let him but continue his course, he thought, and he must surely arrive to the point where this range of coast terminated in the Aurea Chersonesus of the ancients.*

The ardent imagination of Columbus was always sallying in the advance, and suggesting some splendid track of enterprise. Combining his present conjectures as to his situation with the imperfect lights of geography he conceived a triumphant route for his return to Spain. Doubling the Aurea Chersonesus he should emerge into the seas frequented by the ancients, and bordered by the luxurious nations of the East. Stretching across the gulf of the

* The present peninsula of Malaga.

Ganges, he might pass by Taprobana, and continuing on to the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, arrive on the shores of the Red Sea. Thence he might make his way by land to Jerusalem, take shipping at Joppa, and traverse the Mediterranean to Spain. Or, should the route from Ethiopia to Jerusalem be deemed too perilous from savage and warlike tribes, or should he not choose to separate from his vessels, he might sail round the whole coast of Africa, pass triumphantly by the Portuguese, in their midway groping along the shores of Guinea, and after having thus circumnavigated the globe, furl his adventurous sails at the Pillars of Hercules, the *ne plus ultra* of the ancient world! Such was the soaring meditation of Columbus, as recorded by one of his intimate associates*; nor is there anything surprising in his ignorance of the real magnitude of our globe. The mechanical admeasurement of a known part of its circle has rendered its circumference a familiar fact in our day; but in his time it still remained a problem with the most profound philosophers.

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 123, MS.

Chapter V.

RETURN OF COLUMBUS ALONG THE SOUTHERN COAST OF CUBA.

[1494.]

THE opinion of Columbus, that he was coasting the continent of Asia, and approaching the confines of eastern civilization, was shared by all his fellow-voyagers, among whom were several able and experienced navigators. They were far, however, from sharing his enthusiasm. They were to derive no glory from the success of the enterprise, and they shrunk from its increasing difficulties and perils. The ships were strained and crazed by the various injuries they had received in running frequently aground. Their cables and rigging were worn, their provisions were growing scanty, a great part of the biscuit was spoiled by the sea water, which oozed in through innumerable leaks. The crews were worn out by incessant labor, and dis-

heartened at the appearance of the sea before them, which continued to exhibit a mere wilderness of islands. They remonstrated, therefore, against persisting any longer in this voyage. They had already followed the coast far enough to satisfy their minds that it was a continent, and though they doubted not that civilized regions lay in the route they were pursuing, yet their provisions might be exhausted, and their vessels disabled, before they could arrive at them.

Columbus, as his imagination cooled, was himself aware of the inadequacy of his vessels to the contemplated voyage; but felt it of importance to his fame and to the popularity of his enterprises, to furnish satisfactory proofs that the land he had discovered was a continent. He therefore persisted four days longer in exploring the coast, as it bent to the southwest, until every one declared there could no longer be a doubt on the subject, for it was impossible so vast a continuity of land should belong to a mere island. The Admiral was determined however that the fact should not rest on his own assertion merely, having had recent proofs of a disposition to gainsay his statements, and depreciate his discoveries. He sent round therefore a public notary, Fernand Perez de Luna, to each of the vessels, accompanied by

four witnesses, who demanded formally of every person on board, from the captain to the ship-boy, whether he had any doubt that the land before him was a continent, the beginning and end of the Indies, by which any one might return overland to Spain, and by pursuing the coast of which, they could soon arrive among civilized people. If any one entertained a doubt he was called upon to express it, that it might be removed. On board of the vessels, as has been observed, were several experienced navigators and men well versed in the geographical knowledge of the times. They examined their maps and charts, and the reckonings and journals of the voyage, and after deliberating maturely, declared under oath that they had no doubt upon the subject. They grounded their belief principally upon their having coasted for three hundred and thirty-five leagues,* an extent unheard of as appertaining to an island, while the land continued to stretch forward interminably, bending towards the south, conformably to the description of the remote coasts of India.

* This calculation evidently includes all the courses of the ships in their various tacks along the coast. Columbus could hardly have made such an error as to have given this extent to the southern side of the island, even including the inflections of the coast.

Lest they should subsequently, out of malice or caprice, contradict the opinion thus solemnly avowed, it was proclaimed by the notary that whoever should offend in such manner, if an officer, should pay a penalty of ten thousand *maravedis ;* if a ship-boy, or person of like rank, he should receive a hundred lashes, and have his tongue cut out. A formal statement was afterwards drawn up by the notary, including the deposition and names of every individual ; which document still exists.* This singular process took place near that deep bay called by some the bay of Philipina, by others of Cortes. At this very time, as has been remarked, a ship-boy from the mast-head might have overlooked the group of islands to the south, and beheld the open sea beyond.† Two or three days farther sail would have carried Columbus round the extremity of Cuba ; would have dispelled his illusion, and might have given an entirely different course to his subsequent discoveries. In his present conviction he lived and died ; believing, to his last hour, that Cuba was the extremity of the Asiatic continent.

Relinquishing all further investigation of the coast he stood to the southeast on the 13th of June, and soon came in sight of a large island

* Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom. ii.

† Muñoz, *Hist. N. Mundo*, lib. v., p. 217.

with mountains rising majestically among this labyrinth of little keys. To this he gave the name of Evangelista. It is at present known as the island of Pines, and is celebrated for its excellent mahogany.

Here he anchored and took in a supply of wood and water. He then stood to the south, along the shores of the island, hoping by turning its southern extremity to find an open route eastward for Hispaniola, and intending, on his way, to run along the southern side of Jamaica. He had not proceeded far before he came to what he supposed to be a channel, opening to the southeast between Evangelista and some opposite island. After entering for some distance, however, he found himself inclosed in a deep bay, being the Lagoon of Siguanca, which penetrates far into the island.

Observing dismay painted on the faces of his crew at finding themselves thus landlocked and almost destitute of provisions, Columbus cheered them with encouraging words, and resolved to extricate himself from this perplexing maze by retracing his course along Cuba. Leaving the lagoon therefore he returned to his last anchoring-place, and set sail thence on the 25th of June, navigating back through the groups of islands between Evangelista and Cuba, and across a track of the White Sea,

which had so much appalled his people. Here he experienced a repetition of the anxieties, perils, and toils which had beset him in his advance along the coast. The crews were alarmed by the frequent changes in the color of the water, sometimes green, sometimes almost black, at other times as white as milk; at one time they fancied themselves surrounded by rocks, at another the sea appeared to be a vast sand-bank. On the 30th of June the Admiral's ship ran aground with such violence as to sustain great injury. Every effort to extricate her by sending out anchors astern was ineffectual, and it was necessary to drag her over the shoal by the prow. At length they emerged from the clusters of islands called the Jardins and Jardinelles, and came to the open part of the coast of Cuba. Here they once more sailed along the beautiful and fertile provinces of Ornofay, and were again delighted with fragrant and honeyed airs wafted from the land. Among the mingled odors the Admiral fancied he could perceive that of storax proceeding from the smoke of fires blazing on the shore.*

* Humboldt (in his *Essai Polit.*, tom. ii., p. 24) speaks of the fragrance of flowers and honey which exhales from this same coast, and which is perceptible to a considerable distance at sea.

Here Columbus sought some convenient harbor where he might procure wood and water, and allow his crews to enjoy repose and the recreations of the land; for they were exceedingly enfeebled and emaciated by the toils and privations of the voyage. For nearly two months they had been struggling with perpetual difficulties and dangers, and suffering from a scarcity of provisions. Among these uninhabited keys and drowned shores, their supplies from the natives had been precarious and at wide intervals; nor could the fresh provisions thus furnished last above a day, from the heat and humidity of the climate. It was the same case with any fish they chanced to catch, so that they had to depend almost entirely upon their daily allowance of ships' provisions, which was reduced to a pound of mouldy bread, and a small portion of wine. With joy therefore they anchored on the 7th of July in the mouth of a fine river, in this genial and abundant region. The cacique of the neighborhood, who reigned over an extensive territory, received the Admiral with demonstrations of mingled joy and reverence, and his subjects came laden with whatever their country afforded, utias, birds of various kinds, particularly large pigeons, cassava bread, and fruits of a rich and aromatic flavor.

It was a custom with Columbus in all remarkable places which he visited, to erect crosses in conspicuous situations, to denote the discovery of the country, and its subjugation to the true faith. He ordered a large cross of wood therefore to be elevated on the bank of this river. This was done on a Sunday morning with great ceremony, and the celebration of a solemn mass. When he disembarked for this purpose he was met upon the shore by the cacique and his principal favorite, a venerable Indian, fourscore years of age, of grave and dignified deportment. The old man brought a string of beads, of a kind to which the Indians attached a mystic value, and a calabash of a delicate kind of fruit; these he presented to the Admiral in token of amity. He and the cacique then each took him by the hand and proceeded with him to the grove, where preparations had been made for the celebration of the mass: a multitude of the natives followed. While mass was performing in this natural temple the Indians looked on with awe and reverence, perceiving from the tones and gesticulations of the priest, the lighted tapers, the smoking incense, and the devotion of the Spaniards, that it must be a ceremony of a sacred and mysterious nature. When the service ended, the old man of fourscore, who had

contemplated it with profound attention, approached Columbus and made him an oration in the Indian manner.

"This which thou hast been doing," said he, "is well, for it appears to be thy manner of giving thanks to God. I am told that thou hast lately come to these lands with a mighty force, and subdued many countries, spreading great fear among the people; but be not, therefore, vainglorious. Know that, according to our belief, the souls of men have two journeys to perform after they have departed from the body. One to a place, dismal, and foul, and covered with darkness, prepared for those who have been unjust and cruel to their fellow-men; the other pleasant and full of delight, for such as have promoted peace on earth. If, then, thou art mortal and dost expect to die, and dost believe that each one shall be rewarded according to his deeds, beware that thou wrongfully hurt no man, nor do harm to those who have done no harm to thee." *

The Admiral, to whom this speech was explained by his Lucayan interpreter, Diego Colon, was greatly moved by the simple eloquence of this untutored savage. He told him in reply that he rejoiced to hear his doctrine respecting the future state of the soul, having supposed that no belief of the kind existed

* Herrera, decad. i., lib. xi., cap. 14. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 57. Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. iii. Cura de los Palacios, cap. 130.

among the inhabitants of these countries. That he had been sent among them by his sovereigns to teach them the true religion, to protect them from harm and injury, and especially to subdue and punish their enemies and persecutors, the Cannibals. That, therefore, all innocent and peaceable men might look up to him with confidence as an assured friend and protector.

The old man was overjoyed at these words, but was equally astonished to learn that the Admiral, whom he considered so great and powerful, was yet but a subject. His wonder increased when the interpreter told him of the riches and splendor and power of the Spanish monarchs, and of the wonderful things he had beheld on his visit to Spain. Finding himself listened to with eager curiosity by the multitude, the interpreter went on to describe the objects which had most struck his mind in the country of the white men. The splendid cities, the vast churches, the troops of horsemen, the great animals of various kinds, the pompous festivals and tournaments of the court, the glittering armies, and, above all, the bull-fights. The Indians all listened in mute amazement, but the old man was particularly excited. He was of a curious and wandering disposition, and had been a great voyager, having, according to his account, visited Ja-

maica, and Hispaniola, and the remote parts of Cuba.* A sudden desire now seized him to behold the glorious country thus described, and, old as he was, he offered to embark with the Admiral. His wife and children, however, beset him with such lamentations and remonstrances that he was obliged to abandon the intention, though he did it with great reluctance, asking repeatedly if the land they spoke of were not Heaven, for it seemed to him impossible that earth could produce such wonderful beings.†

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 57.

† Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. iii.

Chapter VII.

COASTING VOYAGE ALONG THE SOUTH SIDE OF JAMAICA.

[1494.]

COLUMBUS remained for several days at anchor in the river, to which, from the mass performed on its banks, he gave the name of Rio de la Misa. At length on the 16th of July he took leave of the friendly cacique and his ancient counsellor, who beheld his departure with sorrowful countenances. He took a young Indian with him from this place, whom he afterwards sent to the Spanish sovereigns. Leaving to the left the Queen's Gardens, he steered south for the broad open sea and deep blue water, until having a free navigation he could stand eastward for Hispaniola. He had scarcely got clear of the islands, however, when he was assailed by furious gusts of wind and rain,

which for two days pelted his crazy vessels and harassed his enfeebled crews. At length, as he approached Cape Cruz, a violent squall struck the ships and nearly threw them on their beam ends. Fortunately they were able to take in sail immediately and, letting go their largest anchors, rode out the transient gale. The Admiral's ship was so strained by the injuries received among the islands that she leaked at every seam, and the utmost exertions of the weary crew could not prevent the water from gaining on her. At length they were enabled to reach Cape Cruz, where they anchored on the 18th of July, and remained three days, receiving the same hospitable succor from the natives that they had experienced on their former visit. The wind continuing contrary for the return to Hispaniola, Columbus, on the 22d of July, stood across for Jamaica to complete the circumnavigation of that island. For nearly a month he continued beating to the eastward along its southern coast, experiencing just such variable winds and evening showers as had prevailed along the shores of Cuba. Every evening he was obliged to anchor under the land, often at nearly the same place whence he had sailed in the morning. The natives no longer manifested hostility, but followed their ships in

their canoes, bringing supplies of provisions. Columbus was so much delighted with the verdure, freshness, and fertility of this noble island that, had the state of his vessels and crews permitted, he would gladly have remained to explore the interior. He spoke with admiration of its frequent and excellent harbors, but was particularly pleased with a great bay, containing seven islands, and surrounded by numerous villages.* Anchoring here one evening he was visited by a cacique who resided in a large village situated on an eminence of the loftiest and most fertile of the islands. He came attended by a numerous train, bearing refreshments, and manifested great curiosity in his inquiries concerning the Spaniards, their ships, and the region whence they came. The Admiral made his customary reply, setting forth the great power and the benign intentions of the Spanish sovereigns. The Lucayan interpreter again enlarged upon the wonders he had beheld in Spain, the prowess of the Spaniards, the countries they had visited and subjugated, and, above all, their having made descents on the islands of the Caribs, routed their formidable inhabitants,

* From the description, this must be the great bay east of Portland Point at the bottom of which is Old Harbor.

and carried several of them into captivity. To these accounts the cacique and his followers remained listening in profound attention until the night was advanced.

The next morning the ships were under way and standing along the coast with a light wind and easy sail, when they beheld three canoes issuing from among the islands of the bay. They approached in regular order; one, which was very large and handsomely carved and painted, was in the centre, a little in advance of the two others, which appeared to attend and guard it. In this was seated the cacique and his family, consisting of his wife, two daughters, two sons, and five brothers. One of the daughters was eighteen years of age, beautiful in form and countenance; her sister was somewhat younger; both were naked, according to the custom of these islands, but were of modest demeanor. In the prow of the canoe stood the standard-bearer of the cacique, clad in a mantle of variegated feathers, with a tuft of gay plumes on his head, and bearing in his hand a fluttering white banner. Two Indians with caps or helmets of feathers of uniform shape and color, and their faces painted in a similar manner, beat upon tabors; two others, with hats curiously wrought of green feathers, held trumpets

of a fine black wood, ingeniously carved; there were six others, in large hats of white feathers, who appeared to be guards to the cacique.

Having arrived alongside of the Admiral's ship, the cacique entered on board with all his train. He appeared in full regalia. Around his head was a band of small stones of various colors, but principally green, symmetrically arranged with large white stones at intervals, and connected in front by a large jewel of gold. Two plates of gold were suspended to his ears by rings of very small green stones. To a necklace of white beads, of a kind deemed precious by them, was suspended a large plate, in the form of a *fleur-de-lys*, of guanin, an inferior species of gold; and a girdle of variegated stones, similar to those round his head, completed his regal decorations. His wife was adorned in a similar manner, having also a very small apron of cotton, and bands of the same round her arms and legs. The daughters were without ornaments, excepting the eldest and handsomest, who had a girdle of small stones, from which was suspended a tablet, the size of an ivy leaf, composed of various colored stones, embroidered on net-work of cotton.

When the cacique entered on board the ship he distributed presents of the productions of

his island among the officers and men. The Admiral was at this time in his cabin, engaged in his morning devotions. When he appeared on deck, the chieftain hastened to meet him with an animated countenance.

"My friend," said he, "I have determined to leave my country, and to accompany thee. I have heard from these Indians who are with thee, of the irresistible power of thy sovereigns, and of the many nations thou hast subdued in their name. Whoever refuses obedience to thee is sure to suffer. Thou hast destroyed the canoes and dwellings of the Caribs, slaying their warriors, and carrying into captivity their wives and children. All these islands are in dread of thee; for who can withstand thee now that thou knowest the secrets of the land, and the weakness of the people? Rather, therefore, than thou shouldst take away my dominions, I will embark with all my household in thy ships, and will go to do homage to thy king and queen, and to behold their country, of which thy Indians relate such wonders."

When this speech was explained to Columbus, and he beheld the wife, the sons, and daughters of the cacique, and thought upon the snares to which their ignorance and simplicity would be exposed, he was touched with compassion, and determined not to take them from their native land. He replied to the cacique therefore, that he received him under his protection as a vassal of his sovereigns, but having many

lands yet to visit before he returned to his country, he would at some future time fulfil his desire. Then taking leave with many expressions of amity, the cacique, with his wife and daughter, and all his retinue, re-embarked in the canoes, returning reluctantly to their island, and the ships continued on their course.*

* Hitherto, in narrating the voyage of Columbus along the coast of Cuba, I have been guided principally by the manuscript history of the Curate de los Palacios. His account is the most clear and satisfactory as to names, dates, and routes, and contains many characteristic particulars not inserted in any other history. His sources of information were of the highest kind. Columbus was his guest after his return to Spain in 1496, and left with him manuscripts, journals, and memorandums; from these he made extracts, collating them with the letters of Doctor Chanca, and other persons of note who had accompanied the Admiral.

I have examined two copies of the MS. of the Curate de los Palacios, both in the possession of O. Rich, Esq. One written in an ancient handwriting, in the early part of the sixteenth century, varies from the other, but only in a few trivial particulars.

Chapter VII.

VOYAGE ALONG THE SOUTH SIDE OF HISPANIOLA, AND RETURN TO ISABELLA.

[1494.]

ON the 19th of August Columbus lost sight of the eastern extremity of Jamaica, to which he gave the name of Cape Farol, at present called Point Morant. Steering eastward, he beheld, on the following day, that long peninsula of Hispaniola, know by the name of Cape Tiburon, but to which he gave the name of Cape San Miguel. He was not aware that it was a part of the island of Hayti, until, coasting along its southern side, a cacique came off on the 23d of August, and called him by his title, addressing him with several words of Castilian. The sound of these words spread joy through the ship, and the weary seamen heard with delight that they were on the southern coast of

Hispaniola. They had still, however, many toilsome days before them. The weather was boisterous, the wind contrary and capricious, and the ships were separated from each other. About the end of August Columbus anchored at a small island, or rather rock, which rises singly out of the sea opposite to a long cape, stretching southward from the centre of the island, to which he gave the name of Cape Beata. The rock at which he anchored had the appearance, at a distance, of a tall ship under sail, from which circumstance the Admiral called it "Alto Velo." Several seamen were ordered to climb to the top of the island which commanded a great extent of ocean, and to look out for the other ships. Nothing of them was to be seen. On their return the sailors killed eight sea-wolves, which were sleeping on the sands; they also knocked down many pigeons and other birds with sticks, and took others with the hand; for in this unfrequented island the animals seemed to have none of that wildness and timidity produced by the hostility of man.

Being rejoined by the two caravels he continued along the coast, passing the beautiful country watered by the branches of the Neyva, where a fertile plain, covered with villages and groves, extended into the interior. After pro-

ceeding some distance farther to the east the Admiral learnt from the natives who came off to the ships, that several Spaniards from the settlement had penetrated to their province. From all that he could learn from these people, everything appeared to be going on well in the island. Encouraged by the tranquillity of the interior he landed nine men here, with orders to traverse the island and give tidings of his safe arrival on the coast.

Continuing to the eastward he sent a boat on shore for water near a large village in a plain. The inhabitants issued forth with bows and arrows to give battle, while others were provided with cords to bind prisoners. These were the natives of Higuey, the eastern province of Hispaniola. They were the most warlike people of the island, having been inured to arms from the frequent descents of the Caribs. They were said also to make use of poisoned arrows. In the present instance, their hostility was but in appearance. When the crews landed they threw by their weapons, and brought various articles of food, and asked for the Admiral, whose fame had spread throughout the island, and in whose justice and magnanimity all appeared to repose confidence. After leaving this place, the weather, which had been so long variable and adverse,

assumed a threatening appearance. A huge fish, as large as a moderate sized whale, raised itself out of the water one day, having a shell on its neck like that of a tortoise, two great fins like wings, and a tail like that of a tunny-fish. At sight of this fish, and at the indications of the clouds and sky, Columbus anticipated an approaching storm, and sought some secure harbor.* He found a channel opening between Hispaniola and a small island, called by the Indians Adamaney, but to which he gave the name of Saona ; here he took refuge, anchoring beside a key or islet in the middle of the channel. On the night of his arrival there was an eclipse of the moon, and taking an observation, he found the difference of longitude between Saona and Cadiz to be five hours and twenty-three minutes.† This is upward of eighteen degrees more than the true longitude; an error which must have resulted from the incorrectness of this table of eclipses.‡

For eight days the Admiral's ship remained

* Herrera *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap 15. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 59.

† Herrera, *ubi sup. Hist. Almirante, ubi sup.*

‡ Five hours, twenty-five minutes, are equal to 80° 45′ ; whereas the true longitude of Saona is 62° 20′ west of Cadiz.

weather-bound in this channel, during which time he suffered great anxiety for the fate of the other vessels, which remained at sea, exposed to the violence of the storm. They escaped however uninjured, and once more rejoined him when the weather had moderated.

Leaving the channel of Saona they reached on the 24th of September the eastern extremity of Hispaniola, to which Columbus gave the name of Cape San Rafael, at present known as Cape Engaño. Hence they stood to the southeast, touching the island of Mona, or as the Indians called it Amona, situated between Porto Rico and Hispaniola. It was the intention of Columbus, notwithstanding the condition of the ships, to continue farther eastward, and to complete the discovery of the Caribbee Islands, but his physical strength did not correspond to the efforts of his lofty spirit.* The extraordinary fatigues both of mind and body during an anxious and harassing voyage of five months had preyed upon his frame. He had shared in all the hardships and privations of the commonest seaman. He had put himself upon the same scanty allowance, and exposed himself to the same buffetings of winds and weathers. But he had other cares

* Muñoz, *Hist. N. Mundo*, lib. v., sec. 22.

and trials from which his people were exempt. When the sailor, worn out with the labors of his watch, slept soundly amidst the howling of the storm, the anxious commander maintained his painful vigil through long sleepless nights, amid the pelting of the tempest, and the drenching surges of the sea. The safety of his ships depended upon his watchfulness; but above all he felt that a jealous nation and an expecting world were anxiously awaiting the result of his enterprise. During a great part of the present voyage he had been excited by the constant hope of soon arriving at the known parts of India, and by the anticipation of a triumphant return to Spain, through the regions of the East, after circumnavigating the globe. When disappointed in these expectations, he was yet stimulated by a conflict with incessant hardships and perils, as he made his way back against contrary winds and storms. The moment he was relieved from all solicitude, and beheld himself in a known and tranquil sea, the excitement suddenly ceased, and mind and body sank exhausted by almost superhuman exertions. The very day on which he sailed from Mona he was struck with a sudden malady which deprived him of memory, of sight, and all his faculties. He fell into a deep lethargy,

resembling death itself. His crew, alarmed at this profound torpor, feared that death was really at hand. They abandoned therefore all further prosecution of the voyage ; and spreading their sails to the east wind so prevalent in those seas, bore Columbus back in a state of complete insensibility to the harbor of Isabella.

Book VIII.

Chapter II.

ARRIVAL OF THE ADMIRAL AT ISABELLA—CHARACTER OF BARTHOLOMEW COLUMBUS.

[1494, Sept. 4.]

THE sight of the little squadron of Columbus standing once more into the harbor was hailed with joy by such of the inhabitants of Isabella as remained faithful to him. The long time that had elapsed since his departure on this adventurous voyage without any tidings arriving from him had given rise to the most serious apprehensions for his safety; and it began to be feared that he had fallen a victim to his enterprising spirit in some remote part of these unknown seas.

A joyful and heartfelt surprise awaited the Admiral on his arrival, in finding at his bedside his brother Bartholomew, the companion of his youth, his confidential coadjutor, and in

a manner his second self, from whom he had been separated for several years. It will be recollected that about the time of the Admiral's departure from Portugal, he had commissioned Bartholomew to repair to England and propose his project of discovery to King Henry VII. Of this application to the English court no precise particulars are known. Fernando Columbus states that his uncle, in the course of his voyage, was captured and plundered by a corsair, and reduced to such poverty that he had for a long time to struggle for a mere subsistence by making sea charts; so that some years elapsed before he made his application to the English monarch. Las Casas thinks that he did not immediately proceed to England, having found a memorandum in his handwriting, by which it would appear that he accompanied Bartholomew Diaz in 1486, in his voyage along the coast of Africa, in the service of the King of Portugal, in the course of which voyage was discovered the Cape of Good Hope.*

* The memorandum cited by Las Casas (*Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 7) is curious, though not conclusive. He says that he found it in an old book belonging to Christopher Columbus containing the works of Pedro de Aliaco. It was written in the margin of a treatise on the form of the globe, in the handwriting of Bartholomew Columbus, which was well known to Las

It is but justice to the memory of Henry VII. to say that when the proposition was eventually made to him, it met with a more

Casas, as he had many of his letters in his possession. The memorandum was in a barbarous mixture of Latin and Spanish and to the following effect:

"In the year 1488 in December arrived at Lisbon Bartholomew Diaz, captain of three caravels, which the King of Portugal sent to discover Guinea, and brought accounts that he had discovered six hundred leagues of territory, four hundred and fifty to the south and one hundred and fifty north, to a cape, named by him the Cape of Good Hope; and that by the astrolabe he found the cape forty-five degrees beyond the equinoctial line. This cape was thirty-one hundred leagues distant from Lisbon; the which the said captain says he set down, league by league, in a chart of navigation presented by him to the King of Portugal; in all which," adds the writer, "I was present (*in quibus omnibus interfui*)."

Las Casas expresses a doubt whether Bartholomew wrote this note for himself or on the part of his brother, but infers that one or both were in this expedition. The inference may be correct with respect to Bartholomew, but Christopher at the time specified was at the Spanish court.

Las Casas accounts for a difference in date between the foregoing memorandum and the chronicles of the voyage; the former making the return of Diaz in the year 1488, the latter 1487. This, he observes, might be because some begin to count the year after Christmas, others at the first of January; and the expedition sailed about the end of August, 1486, and returned

ready attention than from any other sovereign. An agreement was actually made with Bartholomew for the prosecution of the enterprise, and the latter departed for Spain in search of

in December, 1487, after an absence of seventeen months.

NOTE.—Since publishing the first edition of this work, the author being in Seville, and making researches in the Bibliotheca Columbina the library given by Fernando Columbus to the cathedral of that city, he came accidentally upon the above-mentioned copy of the work of Pedro Aliaco. He ascertained it to be the same by finding the above-cited memorandum written on the margin at the eighth chapter of the tract called *Imago Mundi.* It is an old volume in folio, bound in parchment, published soon after the invention of printing, containing a collection in Latin of astronomical and cosmographical tracts of Pedro (or Peter) de Aliaco, Archbishop of Cambray and cardinal, and of his disciple John Gerson. Pedro de Aliaco was born in 1340, and died according to some in 1416, according to others in 1425. He was the author of many works, and one of the most learned and scientific men of his day. Las Casas is of opinion that his writings had more effect in stimulating Columbus to his enterprise than those of any other author. "His work was so familiar to Columbus, that he had filled its whole margin with Latin notes in his handwriting, citing many things which he had read and gathered elsewhere. This book, which was very old," continues Las Casas, "I had many times in my hands, and I drew some things from it, written in Latin by the said Admiral Christo-

his brother. On reaching Paris he first received the joyful intelligence that the discovery was already made; that his brother had returned to Spain in triumph; and was actually

pher Columbus to verify certain points appertaining to his history, of which I before was in doubt." (*Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 11.)

It was a great satisfaction to the author, therefore, to discover this identical volume, this *Vade Mecum* of Columbus, in a state of good preservation. [It is in the cathedral library, E——G, Tab. 178, No. 21.] The notes and citations mentioned by Las Casas are in Latin, with many abbreviations, written in very small, but neat and distinct hand, and run throughout the volume, calling attention to the most striking passages, or to those which bear most upon the theories of Columbus; occasionally containing brief comments, or citing the opinions of other authors, ancient or modern, either in support or contradiction of the text. The memorandum particularly cited by Las Casas, mentioning the voyage of Bartholomew Diaz to the Cape of Good Hope, is to disprove an opinion in the text, that the torrid zone was uninhabitable. This volume is a most curious and interesting document, the only one that remains of Columbus prior to his discovery. It illustrates his researches and in a manner the current of his thoughts, while as yet his great enterprise existed but in idea, and while he was seeking means to convince the world of its practicability. It will be found also to contain the grounds of many of his opinions and speculations on a variety of subjects.

at the Spanish court, honored by the sovereigns, caressed by the nobility, and idolized by the people. The glory of Columbus already shed its rays upon his family, and Bartholomew found himself immediately a person of importance. He was noticed by the French monarch, Charles VII., who, understanding that he was low in purse, furnished him with one hundred crowns to defray the expenses of his journey to Spain. He reached Seville just as his brother had departed on his second voyage. Bartholomew immediately repaired to the court, then at Valladolid, taking with him his two nephews, who were to serve in quality of pages to Prince Juan.* He was received with distinguished favor by the sovereigns; who, finding him to be an able and distinguished navigator, gave him the command of three ships freighted with supplies for the colony, and sent him to aid his brother in his enterprises. He had again arrived too late, reaching Isabella just after the departure of the Admiral for the coast of Cuba.

The sight of this brother was an inexpressible relief to Columbus, overwhelmed as he was by cares, and surrounded by strangers. His chief dependence for sympathy and assistance had hitherto been on his brother Don Diego;

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 60.

but his mild and peaceable disposition rendered him little capable of managing the concerns of a factious colony. Bartholomew was of a different and more efficient character. He was prompt, active, decided, and of a fearless spirit; whatever he determined, he carried into instant execution, without regard to difficulty or danger. His person corresponded to his mind; it was tall, muscular, vigorous, and commanding. He had an air of great authority, but somewhat stern, wanting that sweetness and benignity which tempered the authoritative demeanor of the Admiral. Indeed, there was a certain asperity in his temper, and a dryness and abruptness in his manners, which made him many enemies; yet notwithstanding these external defects he was of a generous disposition, free from all arrogance or malevolence, and as placable as he was brave.

He was a thorough seaman, understanding both the theory and practice of his profession; having been formed, in a great measure, under the eye of the Admiral, and being but little inferior to him in science. He was superior to him in the exercise of the pen, according to Las Casas, who had letters and manuscripts of both in his possession. He was acquainted with Latin, but does not appear to have been highly educated; his knowledge, like that of

his brother, being chiefly derived from a long course of varied experience and attentive observation. Equally vigorous and penetrating in intellect with the Admiral, but less enthusiastic in spirit and soaring in imagination, and with less simplicity of heart, he surpassed him in subtle and adroit management of business, was more attentive to his interests, and had more of that worldly wisdom which is so important in the ordinary concerns of life. His genius might never have enkindled him to the sublime speculation which ended in the discovery of a world, but his practical sagacity was calculated to turn that discovery to advantage. Such is the description of Bartholomew Columbus, as furnished by the venerable Las Casas from personal observation*; and it will be found to accord with his actions throughout the remaining history of the Admiral, in the events of which he takes a conspicuous part.

Anxious to relieve himself from the pressure of public business, which weighed heavily upon him during his present malady, Columbus immediately invested his brother Bartholomew with the title and authority of Adelantado, an office equivalent to that of lieutenant-governor. He considered himself entitled to do so from the articles of his arrangement with the sovereigns,

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib., i. cap. 29.

DON BARTHOLMEO
COLON
L. Adelantado.

but it was looked upon by King Ferdinand as an undue assumption of power, and gave great offence to that jealous monarch, who was exceedingly tenacious of the prerogatives of the Crown, and considered dignities of this rank and importance as only to be conferred by royal mandate.* Columbus however was not actuated in this appointment by a mere desire to aggrandize his family. He felt the importance of his brother's assistance in the present critical state of the colony, but that this co-operation would be inefficient unless it bore the stamp of high official authority. In fact, during the few months that he had been absent, the whole island had become a scene of discord and violence in consequence of the neglect, or rather the flagrant violation, of those rules which he had prescribed for the maintenance of its tranquillity. A brief retrospect of the recent affairs of the colony is here necessary to explain their present confusion. It will exhibit one of the many instances in which Columbus was doomed to reap the fruits of the evil seed sown by his adversaries.

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib., i. cap. 101.

Chapter II.

MISCONDUCT OF DON PEDRO MARGARITE AND HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE ISLAND.

[1494.]

IT will be recollected that before departing on his voyage, Columbus had given the command of the army to Don Pedro Margarite, with orders to make a military tour of the island, awing the natives by a display of military force, but conciliating their good-will by equitable and amicable treatment.

The island was at this time divided into five domains, each governed by a cacique, of absolute and hereditary power, to whom a great number of inferior caciques yield tributary allegiance. The first or most important domain comprised the middle part of the Royal Vega. It was a rich, lovely country, partly cultivated after the imperfect manner of the natives, partly covered with noble forests, studded with Indian towns, and watered by

numerous rivers, many of which, rolling down from the mountains of Caibo on its southern frontier, had gold-dust mingled with their sands. The name of the cacique was Guarionex, whose ancestors had long ruled over the province.

The second, called Marien, was under the sway of Guacanagari, on whose coast Columbus had been wrecked in his first voyage. It was a large and fertile territory, extending along the northern coast from Cape St. Nicholas at the western extremity of the island to the great river Yaqui, afterwards called Monte Christi, and including the northern part of the Royal Vega, since called the plain of St. François, now Cape Haytien.

The third bore the name of Maguana. It extended along the southern coast from the river Ozema to the lakes, and comprised the chief part of the centre of the island lying along the southern face of the mountains of Cibao, the mineral district of Hayti. It was under the dominion of the Carib cacique, Caonabo, the most fierce and puissant of the savage chieftains, and the inveterate enemy of the white men.

The fourth took its name from Xaragua, a large lake, and was the most populous and extensive of all. It comprised the whole

western coast, including the long promontory of Cape Tiburon, and extended for a considerable distance along the southern side of the island. The inhabitants were finely formed, had a noble air, a more agreeable elocution, and more soft and graceful manners than the natives of the other parts of the island. The sovereign was named Behechio; his sister, Anacaona, celebrated throughout the island for her beauty, was the favorite wife of the neighboring Cacique Caonabo.

The fifth domain was Higuey, and occupied the whole eastern part of the island, being bounded on the north by the bay of Samana and part of the river Yuna, and on the west by the Ozema. The inhabitants were the most active and warlike people of the island, having learnt the use of the bow and arrow from the Caribs, who made frequent descents upon their coasts; they were said also to make use of poisoned weapons. Their bravery however was but comparative, and was found eventually of little avail against the terror of European arms. They were governed by a cacique named Cotubanama.*

Such were the five territorial divisions of the island at the time of its discovery. The amount of its population has never been clearly ascer-

* Charlevoix, *Hist. St. Domingo*, lib. i., p. 69.

tained; some have stated it at a million of souls, though this was considered an exaggeration. It must however have been very numerous, and sufficient, in case of any general hostility, to endanger the safety of a handful of Europeans. Columbus trusted for safety partly to the awe inspired by the weapons and horses of the Spaniards, and the idea of their superhuman nature, but chiefly to the measures he had taken to conciliate the good-will of the Indians by gentle and beneficent treatment.

Margarite set forth on his expedition with the greater part of his forces, leaving Alonso de Ojeda in command of the fortress of St. Thomas. Instead however of commencing by exploring the rough mountains of Cibao, as he had been commanded, he descended into the fertile region of the Vega. Here he lingered among the populous and hospitable Indian villages, forgetful of the object of his command and of the instructions left him by the Admiral. A commander who lapses from duty himself is little calculated to enforce discipline. The sensual indulgences of Margarite were imitated by his followers, and his army soon became little better than a crew of riotous marauders. The Indians for a time supplied them with provisions with their

wonted hospitality, but the scanty stores of those abstemious yet improvident people were soon exhausted by the Spaniards, one of whom, they declared, would consume more in a day than would support an Indian for a month. If provisions were withheld or scantily furnished they were taken with violence; nor was any compensation given to the natives, nor means taken to sooth their irritation. The avidity for gold also led to a thousand acts of injustice and oppression; but above all the Spaniards outraged the dearest feelings of the natives by their licentious conduct with respect to the women. In fact, instead of guests, they soon assumed the tone of imperious masters; instead of enlightened benefactors, they became sordid and sensual oppressors.

Tidings of these excesses, and of the disgust and impatience they were awakening among the natives, soon reached Don Diego Columbus. With the concurrence of the council he wrote to Margarite reprehending his conduct, and requesting him to proceed on the military tour, according to the commands of the Admiral. The pride of Margarite took fire at this reproof; he considered, or rather pretended to consider himself independent in his command, and above all responsibility to the council for his conduct. Being of an ancient

family, also, and a favorite of the King, he affected to look down with contempt upon the newly coined nobility of Diego Columbus. His letters, in reply to the orders of the president and council, were couched in a tone either of haughty contumely or of military defiance. He continued with his followers quartered in the Vega, persisting in a course of outrages and oppressions fatal to the tranquillity of the island.

He was supported in his arrogant defiance of authority by the cavaliers and adventurers of noble birth who were in the colony, and who had been deeply wounded in the proud *punctilio* so jealously guarded by a Spaniard. They could not forget nor forgive the stern equity exercised by the Admiral in a time of emergency, in making them submit to the privations and share the labors of the vulgar. Still less could they brook the authority of his brother Diego, destitute of his high personal claims to distinction. They formed, therefore, a kind of aristocratical faction in the colony; affecting to consider Columbus and his family as mere mercenary and upstart foreigners, building up their own fortunes at the expense of the toils and sufferings of the community, and the degradation of Spanish *hidalgos* and cavaliers.

In addition to these partisans Margarite had

a powerful ally in his fellow-countryman, Friar Boyle, the head of the religious fraternity, one of the members of the council, and apostolical vicar of the New World. It is not easy to ascertain the original cause of the hostility of this holy friar to the Admiral, who was never wanting in respect to the clergy. Various altercations however had taken place between them. Some say that the friar interfered in respect to the strict measures deemed necessary by the Admiral for the security of the colony; others that he resented the fancied indignity offered to himself and his household, in putting them on the same short allowance with the common people. He appears however to have been generally disappointed and disgusted with the sphere of action afforded by the colony, and to have looked back with regret to the Old World. He had none of that enthusiastic zeal and persevering self-devotion, which induced so many of the Spanish missionaries to brave all the hardships and privations of the New World, in the hope of converting its pagan inhabitants.

Encouraged and fortified by such powerful partisans, Margarite really began to consider himself above the temporary authorities of the island. Whenever he came to Isabella he took no notice of Don Diego Columbus, nor paid

any respect to the council, but acted as if he had paramount command. He formed a cabal of most of those who were disaffected to Columbus and discontented with their abode in the colony. Among these the leading agitator was Friar Boyle. It was concerted among them to take possession of the ships which had brought out Don Bartholomew Columbus, and to return in them to Spain. Both Margarite and Boyle possessed the favor of the King, and they deemed it would be an easy matter to justify their abandonment of their military and religious commands by a pretended zeal for the public good; hurrying home to represent the disastrous state of the country, through the tyranny and oppression of its rulers. Some have ascribed the abrupt departure of Margarite to his fear of a severe military investigation of his conduct on the return of the Admiral; others to his having, in the course of his licentious amours, contracted a malady at that time new and unknown, and which he attributed to the climate, and hoped to cure by medical assistance in Spain. Whatever may have been the cause, his measures were taken with great precipitancy, without any consultation of the proper authorities, or any regard to the consequences of his departure. Accompanied by a band of malcontents, he and Friar Boyle took

possession of some ships in the harbor, and set sail for Spain ; the first general and apostle of the New World thus setting the flagrant example of unauthorized abandonment of their posts.

Chapter III.

TROUBLES WITH THE NATIVES—ALONSO DE OJEDA BESIEGED BY CAONABO.

[1494.]

THE departure of Pedro Margarite left the army without a head, and put an end to what little restraint or discipline remained. There is no rabble so licentious as soldiery left to their own direction in a defenceless country. They now roved about in bands, or singly, according to their caprice, scattering themselves among the Indian villages, and indulging in all kinds of excesses, either as prompted by avarice or sensuality. The natives, indignant at having their hospitality thus requited, refused any longer to furnish them with food. In a little while the Spaniards began to experience the pressure of hunger, and seized upon provisions wherever they could be found, accompanying these seizures with acts of wanton violence. At length,

by a series of flagrant outrages, the gentle and pacific nature of this people was roused to resentment, and from confiding and hospitable hosts, they were converted into vindictive enemies. All the precautions enjoined by Columbus having been neglected, the evils he had apprehended came to pass. Though the Indians, naturally timid, dared not contend with the Spaniards while they kept up any combined and disciplined force, yet they took sanguinary vengeance on them whenever they met with small parties or scattered individuals, roving about in quest of food. Encouraged by these petty triumphs, and the impunity which seemed to attend them, their hostilities grew more and more alarming. Guatiguana, cacique of a large town on the banks of the Grand River, in the dominions of Guarionex, sovereign of the Vega, put to death ten Spaniards, who had quartered themselves in his town, and outraged the inhabitants by their licentiousness. He followed up this massacre by setting fire to a house in which forty-six Spaniards were lodged.* Flushed by this success he threatened to attack a small fortress called Magdalena, which had recently been built in his neighborhood in the Vega; so that the commander, Luis de Arriaga, having but a feeble

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 16.

garrison, was obliged to remain shut up within its walls until relief should arrive from Isabella.

The most formidable enemy of the Spaniards however was Caonabo, the Carib cacique of Maguana. With natural talents for war, and intelligence superior to the ordinary range of savage intellect, he had a proud and daring spirit to urge him on, three valiant brothers to assist him, and a numerous tribe at his command.* He had always felt jealous of the intrusion of the white men into the island; but particularly exasperated by the establishment of the fortress of St. Thomas, erected in the very centre of his dominions. As long as the army lay within call in the Vega he was deterred from any attack; but when, on the departure of Margarite, it became dismembered and dispersed, the time for striking a signal blow seemed arrived. The fortress remained isolated, with a garrison of only fifty men. By a sudden and secret movement he might overwhelm it with his forces, and repeat the horrors which he had wreaked upon La Navidad.

The wily Cacique, however, had a different kind of enemy to deal with in the commander of St. Thomas. Alonso de Ojeda had been schooled in Moorish warfare. He was versed in all kinds of feints, stratagems, lurking am-

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 16.

buscades, and wild assaults. No man was more fitted therefore to cope with Indian warriors. He had a headlong courage, arising partly from the natural heat and violence of his disposition, and, in a great measure, from religious superstition. He had been engaged in wars with Moors and Indians, in public battle and private combats, in fights, feuds, and encounters of all kinds, to which he had been prompted by a rash and fiery spirit, and a love of adventure; yet he had never been wounded, nor lost a drop of blood. He began to doubt whether any weapon had power to harm him, and to consider himself under the special protection of the Holy Virgin. As a kind of religious talisman, he had a small Flemish painting of the Virgin, given him by his patron, Fonseca, Bishop of Badajoz. This he constantly carried with him, in city, camp or field, making it the object of his frequent orisons and invocations. In garrison or encampment, it was suspended in his chamber or his tent; in his rough expeditions in the wilderness he carried it in his knapsack, and whenever leisure permitted, would take it out, fix it against a tree, and address his prayers to this military patroness.* In a word, he

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. viii., cap. 4. *Pizarro Varonese Illustres*, cap. 8.

swore by the Virgin, he invoked the Virgin whether in brawl or battle, and under the favor of the Virgin he was ready for any enterprise or adventure. Such was Alonso de Ojeda; bigoted in his devotion, reckless in his life, fearless in his spirit, like many of the roving Spanish cavaliers of those days. Though small in size, he was a prodigy of strength and prowess; and the chroniclers of the early discoveries relate marvels of his valor and exploits.

Having reconnoitred the fortress Caonabo assembled ten thousand warriors, armed with war clubs, bows and arrows, and lances hardened in the fire; and making his way secretly through the forests, came suddenly in the neighborhood, expecting to surprise the garrison in a state of careless security. He found Ojeda's forces however drawn up warily within his tower, which, being built upon an almost insulated height, with a river nearly surrounding it, and the remaining space traversed by a deep ditch, set at defiance an attack by naked warriors.

Foiled in his attempt Caonabo now hoped to reduce it by famine. For this purpose he distributed his warriors through the adjacent forests; and waylaid every pass, so as to intercept any supplies brought by the natives, and

to cut off any foraging party from the fortress. This siege, or investment, lasted for thirty days,* and reduced the garrison to great distress. There is a traditional anecdote, which Oviedo relates of Pedro Margarite, the former commander of this fortress, but which may with more probability be ascribed to Alonso de Ojeda, as having occurred during this siege. At a time when the garrison was sore pressed by famine, an Indian gained access to the fort, bringing a couple of wood-pigeons for the table of the commander. The latter was in an apartment of the tower surrounded by several of his officers. Seeing them regard the birds with the wistful eyes of famishing men, "It is a pity," said he, "that there is not enough to give us all a meal; I cannot consent to feast while the rest of you are starving"; so saying, he turned loose the pigeons from a window of the tower.

During the siege, Ojeda displayed the greatest activity of spirit and fertility of resource. He baffled all the arts of the Carib chieftain, concerting stratagems of various kinds to relieve the garrison and annoy the foe. He sallied forth whenever the enemy appeared in any force, leading the van with the headlong valor for which he was noted; making great

* P. Martyr, decad. i., lib. iv.

slaughter with his single arm and, as usual, escaping unhurt from amidst showers of darts and arrows.

Caonabo saw many of his bravest warriors slain. His forces were diminishing, for the Indians, unused to any protracted operations of war, grew weary of this siege, and returned daily in numbers to their homes. He gave up all further attempt therefore on the fortress, and retired, filled with admiration of the prowess and achievements of Ojeda.*

The restless chieftain was not discouraged by the failure of this enterprise, but meditated schemes of a bolder and more extensive nature. Prowling in secret in the vicinity of Isabella, he noted the enfeebled state of the settlement.† Many of the inhabitants were suffering under various maladies, and most of the men capable of bearing arms were distributed about the country. He now conceived the project of a general league among the caciques, to surprise and overwhelm the settlement, and massacre the Spaniards wherever they could be found. This handful of intruders once exterminated, he trusted the island would be delivered from all further molestation of the kind; little dreaming of the

* Oviedo, *Cronica de los Indias*, lib. iii., cap. 1.

† *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 60.

hopeless nature of the contest, and that where the civilized man once plants his foot, the power of the savage is gone forever.

Reports of the profligate conduct of the Spaniards had spread throughout the island, and inspired hatred and hostility even among tribes who had never beheld them, nor suffered from their misdeeds. Caonabo found three of the sovereign caciques inclined to cooperate with him, though impressed with deep awe of the supernatural power of the Spaniards, and of their terrific arms and animals. The league however met with unexpected opposition in the fifth cacique, Guacanagari, the sovereign of Marien. His conduct in this time of danger completely manifested the injustice of the suspicions which had been entertained of him by the Spaniards. He refused to join the other caciques with his forces, or to violate those laws of hospitality by which he had considered himself bound to protect and aid the white men, ever since they had been shipwrecked on his coast. He remained quietly in his dominions, entertaining at his own expense a hundred of the suffering soldiery, and supplying all their wants with his accustomed generosity. This conduct drew upon him the odium and hostility of his fellow caciques, particularly of the fierce Carib,

Caonabo, and his brother-in-law, Behechio. They made irruptions into his territories, and inflicted on him various injuries and indignities. Behechio killed one of his wives, and Caonabo carried another away captive.* Nothing, however, could shake the devotion of Guacanagari to the Spaniards; and as his dominions lay immediately adjacent to the settlement, and those of some of the other caciques were very remote, the want of his co-operation impeded for some time the hostile designs of his confederates.†

Such was the critical state to which the affairs of the colony had been reduced, and such the bitter hostility engendered among the people of the island, during the absence of Columbus, and merely in consequence of violating all his regulations. Margarite and Friar Boyle had hastened to Spain to make false representations of the miseries of the island. Had they remained faithfully at their posts, and discharged zealously the trust confided to them, those miseries might have been easily remedied, if not entirely prevented.

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 2.

† Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 16.

Chapter IV.

MEASURES OF COLUMBUS TO RESTORE THE QUIET OF THE ISLAND—EXPEDITION OF OJEDA TO SURPRISE CAONABO.

[1494.]

IMMEDIATELY after the return of Columbus from Cuba, while he was yet confined to his bed by indisposition, he was gratified by a voluntary visit from Guacanagari, who manifested the greatest concern at his illness, for he appears to have always entertained an affectionate reverence for the Admiral. He again spoke with tears of the massacre of Fort Nativity, dwelling on the exertions he had made in defence of the Spaniards. He now informed Columbus of the secret league forming among the caciques; of his opposition to it, and the consequent persecution he had suffered; of the murder of one of his wives, and the capture of another. He urged the Admiral to be on his guard against

the designs of Caonabo, and offered to lead his subjects to the field, to fight by the side of the Spaniards, as well out of friendship for them, as in revenge of his own injuries.*

Columbus had always retained a deep sense of the ancient kindness of Guacanagari, and was rejoiced to have all suspicion of his good faith thus effectually dispelled. Their former amicable intercourse was renewed, with this difference, that the man whom Guacanagari had once relieved and succored as a ship-wrecked stranger, had suddenly become the arbiter of the fate of himself and all his countrymen.

The manner in which this peaceful island had been exasperated and embroiled by the licentious conduct of the Europeans was a matter of deep concern to Columbus. He saw all his plans of deriving an immediate revenue to the sovereigns completely impeded. To restore the island to tranquillity required skilful management. His forces were but small, and the awe in which the natives had stood of the white men, as supernatural beings, had been in some degree dispelled. He was too ill to take a personal share in any warlike enterprise; his brother Diego was not a military character, and Bartholomew was yet a

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 16.

stranger among the Spaniards, and regarded by the leading men with jealousy. Still Columbus considered the threatened combination of the caciques as but imperfectly formed; he trusted to their want of skill and experience in warfare, and conceived that by prompt measures, by proceeding in detail, punishing some, conciliating others, and uniting force, gentleness, and stratagem, he might succeed in dispelling the threatened storm.

His first care was to send a body of armed men to the relief of Fort Magdalena, menaced with destruction by Guatiguana, the cacique of the Grand River, who had massacred the Spaniards quartered in his town. Having relieved the fortress the troops overran the territory of Guatiguana, killing many of his warriors, and carrying others off captives: the chieftain himself made his escape.* He was tributary to Guarionex, sovereign cacique of the Royal Vega. As this Indian prince reigned over a great and populous extent of country, his friendship was highly important for the prosperity of the colony, while there was imminent risk of his hostility, from the unbridled excesses of the Spaniards who had been quartered in his dominions. Columbus sent for him therefore and explained to

* Herrera, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 16.

him that these excesses had been in violation of his orders, and contrary to his good intentions towards the natives, whom it was his wish in every way to please and benefit. He explained likewise that the expedition against Guatiguana was an act of mere individual punishment, not of hostility against the territories of Guarionex. The Cacique was of a quiet and placable disposition, and whatever anger he might have felt was easily soothed. To link him in some degree to the Spanish interest, Columbus prevailed on him to give his daughter in marriage to the Indian interpreter, Diego Colon.* As a stronger precaution against any hostility on the part of the Cacique, and to insure tranquillity in the important region of the Vega, he ordered a fortress to be erected in the midst of his territories, which he named Fort Conception. The easy Cacique agreed without hesitation to a measure fraught with ruin to himself, and future slavery to his subjects.

The most formidable enemy remained to be disposed of,—Caonabo. His territories lay

* P. Martyr, decad. i., lib. iv. Gio. Battista Spotorno, in his *Memoir of Columbus*, has been led into an error by the name of this Indian, and observes that Columbus had a brother named Diego, of whom he seemed to be ashamed, and whom he married to the daughter of an Indian chief.

in the central and mountainous parts of the island, rendered difficult of access by rugged rocks, entangled forests, and frequent rivers. To make war upon this subtle and ferocious chieftain, in the depths of his wild woodland territory, and among the fastnesses of his mountains, where, at every step, there would be danger of ambush, would be a work of time, peril, and uncertain issue. In the meanwhile the settlements would never be secure from his secret and daring enterprises, and the working of the mines would be subject to frequent interruption. While perplexed on this subject, Columbus was relieved by an offer of Alonso de Ojeda, to take the Carib chieftain by stratagem, and deliver him alive into his hands. The project was wild, hazardous, and romantic, characteristic of Ojeda, who was fond of distinguishing himself by extravagant exploits and feats of desperate bravery.

Choosing ten old and hardy followers, well armed and well mounted, and invoking the protection of his patroness, the Virgin, whose image as usual he bore with him as a safeguard, Ojeda plunged into the forest and made his way above sixty leagues into the wild territories of Caonabo, whom he found in one of his most populous towns,

the same now called Maguana, near the town of San Juan. Approaching the Cacique with great deference as a sovereign prince, he professed to come on a friendly embassy from the Admiral, who was Guamiquina or chief of the Spaniards, and who had sent him an invaluable present.

Caonabo had tried Ojeda in battle; he had witnessed his fiery prowess, and had conceived a warrior's admiration of him. He received him with a degree of chivalrous courtesy, if such a phrase may apply to the savage state and rude hospitality of a wild warrior of the forest. The free, fearless deportment, the great personal strength, and the surprising agility and adroitness of Ojeda in all manly exercises, and in the use of all kinds of weapons, were calculated to delight a savage, and he soon became a great favorite with Caonabo.

Ojeda now used all his influence to prevail upon the Cacique to repair to Isabella, for the purpose of making a treaty with Columbus, and becoming the ally and friend of the Spaniards. It is said that he offered him, as a lure, the bell of the chapel of Isabella. This bell was the wonder of the island. When the Indians heard it ringing for mass, and beheld the Spaniards hastening toward the chapel,

they imagined that it talked, and that the white men obeyed it. Regarding with superstition all things connected with the Spaniards, they looked upon this bell as something supernatural, and in their usual phrase, said it had come from *Turey* or the skies. Caonabo had heard the bell at a distance, in his prowlings about the settlement, and had longed to see it; but when it was proffered to him as a present of peace, he found it impossible to resist the temptation. He agreed therefore to set out for Isabella; but when the time came to depart, Ojeda beheld with surprise a powerful force of warriors assembled and ready to march. He asked the meaning of taking such an army on a mere friendly visit; the Cacique proudly replied that it did not befit a great prince, like himself, to go forth scantily attended. Ojeda was little satisfied with this reply; he knew the warlike character of Caonabo, and his deep subtlety; he feared some sinister design; a surprise of the fortress of Isabella, or an attempt upon the person of the Admiral. He knew also that it was the wish of Columbus, either to make peace with the Cacique, or to get possession of his person without the alternative of open warfare. He had recourse to a stratagem, therefore, which has an air of fable and romance, but which is

recorded by all the contemporary historians with trivial variations, and which Las Casas assures us was in current circulation in the island when he arrived there, about six years after the event. It accords too with the adventurous and extravagant character of the man, and with the wild stratagems and vaunting exploits incident to Indian warfare.

In the course of their march, having halted near the Little Yaqui, a considerable branch of the Neyba, Ojeda one day produced a set of manacles of polished steel, so highly burnished that they looked like silver. These he assured Caonabo were royal ornaments which had come from heaven, or the *Turey* of Biscay*; that they were worn by the monarchs of Castile on solemn dances, and other high festivities, and were intended as presents to the Cacique. He proposed that Caonabo should go to the river and bathe, after which he should be decorated with these ornaments, mounted on the horse of Ojeda, and should return in the state of a Spanish monarch, to astonish his subjects. The Cacique was dazzled with the glitter of the manacles, and flattered with the idea of bestriding one of those tremendous

* The principal iron manufactories of Spain are established in Biscay, where the ore is found in abundance.

animals so dreaded by his countrymen. He repaired to the river, and having bathed, was assisted to mount behind Ojeda, and the shackles were adjusted. Ojeda made several circuits to gain space, followed by his little band of horsemen, the Indians shrinking back from the prancing steeds. At length he made a wide sweep into the forest, until the trees concealed him from the sight of the army. His followers then closed around him, and drawing their swords threatened Caonabo with instant death if he made the least noise or resistance. Binding him with cords to Ojeda to prevent his falling or effecting an escape, they put spurs to their horses, dashed across the river, and made off through the woods with their prize.*

They had now fifty or sixty leagues of wilderness to traverse on their way homewards with here and there large Indian towns. They had borne off their captive far beyond the pursuit of his subjects; but the utmost vigilance was requisite to prevent his escape during this long

* This romantic exploit of Ojeda is recorded at large by Las Casas; by his copyist Herrera (decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 16); by Fernando Pizarro, in his *Varones Illustres del Nuevo Mundo;* and by Charlevoix in his *History of St. Domingo.* Peter Martyr and others have given it more concisely, alluding to but not inserting its romantic details.

and toilsome journey, and to avoid exciting the hostilities of any confederate cacique. They had to shun the populous parts of the country, therefore, and to pass through the Indian towns at full gallop. They suffered greatly from fatigue, hunger, and watchfulness; encountering many perils, fording and swimming the numerous rivers of the plains, toiling through the deep tangled forests, and clambering over the high and rocky mountains. They accomplished all in safety, and Ojeda entered Isabella in triumph from this most daring and characteristic enterprise, with his wild Indian bound behind.

Columbus could not refrain from expressing his great satisfaction when this dangerous foe was delivered into his hands. The haughty Carib met him with a lofty and unsubdued air, disdaining to conciliate him by submission, or to deprecate his vengeance for the blood of white men which he had shed. He never bowed his spirit to captivity; on the contrary, though completely at the mercy of the Spaniards, he displayed that boasting defiance which is a part of Indian heroism, and which the savage maintains towards his tormentors, even amidst the agonies of the faggot and the stake. He vaunted his achievement in surprising and burning the fortress of Nativity,

and slaughtering its garrison, and declared that he had secretly reconnoitred Isabella, with an intention of wreaking upon it the same desolation.

Columbus, though struck with the heroism of the chieftain, considered him a dangerous enemy, whom, for the peace of the island, it was advisable to send to Spain; in the meantime he ordered that he should be treated with kindness and respect, and lodged him in a part of his own dwelling, where however he kept him a prisoner in chains. This precaution must have been necessary, from the insecurity of his prison; for Las Casas observes that the Admiral's house not being spacious nor having many chambers the passers-by in the street could see the captive chieftain from the portal.*

Caonabo always maintained a haughty deportment towards Columbus, while he never evinced the least animosity against Ojeda. He rather admired the latter as a consummate warrior, for having pounced upon him and borne him off in this hawk-like manner from the very midst of his fighting-men.

When Columbus entered the apartment where Caonabo was confined, all present rose according to custom and paid him reverence; the Cacique alone neither moved nor took any

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 102.

notice of him. On the contrary, when Ojeda entered, though small in person and without external state, Caonabo rose and saluted him with profound respect. On being asked the reason of this, Columbus being Guamiquina, or great chief over all, and Ojeda but one of his subjects, the proud Carib replied that the Admiral had never dared to come personally to his house and seize him; it was only through the valor of Ojeda he was his prisoner; to Ojeda, therefore, he owed reverence, not to the Admiral.*

The captivity of Caonabo was deeply felt by his subjects, for the natives of this island seem generally to have been extremely loyal and strongly attached to their caciques. One of the brothers of Caonabo, a warrior of great courage and address, and very popular among the Indians, assembled an army of more than seven thousand men, and led them secretly to the neighborhood of St. Thomas, where Ojeda was again in command. His intention was to surprise a number of Spaniards, in hopes of obtaining his brother in exchange for them. Ojeda as usual had notice of the design, but was not to be again shut up in his fortress. Having been reinforced by a detachment sent by the Adelantado, he left a sufficient force in

* Las Casas, *ubi sup.*, cap. 102.

garrison, and with the remainder and his little troop of horse set off boldly to meet the savages. The brother of Caonabo, when he saw the Spaniards approaching, showed some military skill, disposing his army in five battalions. The impetuous attack of Ojeda, however, with his handful of horsemen, threw the Indian warriors into sudden panic. At the furious onset of these steel-clad beings, wielding their flashing weapons and bestriding what appeared to be ferocious beasts of prey, they threw down their weapons and took to flight. Many were slain, more were taken prisoners, and among the latter was the brother of Caonabo, bravely fighting in a righteous yet desperate cause.*

* Oviedo, *Cronica de los Indias*, lib. iii., cap. 1. Charlevoix, *Hist. St. Domingo*, lib. ii., p. 131.

Chapter V.

ARRIVAL OF ANTONIO DE TORRES WITH FOUR SHIPS FROM SPAIN—HIS RETURN WITH INDIAN SLAVES.

[1494.]

THE colony was still suffering greatly from want of provisions; the European stock was nearly exhausted, and such was the idleness and improvidence of the colonists or the confusion into which they had been thrown by the hostilities of the natives, or such was their exclusive eagerness after the precious metals that they seem to have neglected the true wealth of the island, its quick and productive soil, to have been in constant danger of famine, though in the midst of fertility.

At length they were relieved by the arrival of four ships, commanded by Antonio Torres, which brought an ample supply of provisions. There were also a physician and an apothecary, whose aid was greatly needed in the sickly

state of the colony; but above all, there were mechanics, millers, fishermen, gardeners, and husbandmen,—the true kind of population for a colony.

Torres brought letters from the sovereigns (dated August 16, 1494,) of the most gratifying kind, expressing the highest satisfaction at the accounts sent home by the Admiral, and acknowledging that everything in the course of his discoveries had turned out as he had predicted. They evinced the liveliest interest in the affairs of the colony, and a desire of receiving frequent intelligence as to his situation, proposing that a caravel should sail each month from Isabella and Spain. They informed him that all differences with Portugal were amicably adjusted, and acquainted him with the conventional agreement with that power relative to a geographical line, separating their newly discovered possessions; requesting him to respect this agreement in the course of his discoveries. As in adjusting the arrangement with Portugal, and in drawing the proposed line, it was important to have the best advice, the sovereigns requested Columbus to return and be present at the convention; or, in case that should be inconvenient, to send his brother Bartholomew, or any other person whom he should consider fully competent, furnished with

such maps, charts, and designs, as might be of service in the negotiation.*

There was another letter, addressed generally to the inhabitants of the colony, and to all who should proceed on voyages of discovery, commanding them to obey Columbus as implicitly as they would the sovereigns themselves, under pain of their high displeasure, and a fine of ten thousand *maravedis* for each offence.

Such was the well-merited confidence reposed at this moment by the sovereigns in Columbus, but which was soon to be blighted by the insidious reports of worthless men. He was already aware of the complaints and misrepresentations which had been sent home from the colony, and which would be enforced by Margarite and Friar Boyle. He was aware that his standing in Spain was of that uncertain kind which a stranger always possesses in the service of a foreign country, where he has no friends or connections to support him, and where even his very merits increase the eagerness of envy to cast him down. His efforts to promote the working of the mines, and to explore the resources of the island, had been impeded by the misconduct of Margarite and the disorderly life of the Spaniards in general, yet he apprehended that the very evils which they

* Herrera, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 17.

had produced would be alleged against him, and the want of profitable returns be cited to discredit and embarrass his expeditions.

To counteract any misrepresentations of the kind, Columbus hastened the return of the ships, and would have returned with them, not merely to comply with the wishes of the sovereigns in being present at the settlement of the geographical line, but to vindicate himself and his enterprises from the aspersions of his enemies. The malady, however, which confined him to his bed prevented his departure; and his brother Bartholomew was required to aid, with his practical good sense, and his resolute spirit, in regulating the disordered affairs of the island. It was determined, therefore, to send home his brother Diego, to attend to the wishes of the sovereigns, and to take care of his interests at court. At the same time, he exerted himself to the utmost to send by the ships satisfactory proofs of the value of his discoveries. He remitted by them all the gold that he could collect, with specimens of other metals, and of various fruits and valuable plants, which he had collected either in Hispaniola or in the course of his voyage. In his eagerness to produce immediate profit, and to indemnify the sovereigns for those expenses which bore

hard upon the royal treasury, he sent, likewise, above five hundred Indian prisoners, who, he suggested, might be sold as slaves at Seville.

It is painful to find the brilliant renown of Columbus sullied by so foul a stain. The customs of the times, however, must be pleaded in his apology. The precedent had been given long before, by both Spaniards and Portuguese, in their African discoveries, wherein the traffic in slaves had formed one of the greatest sources of profit. In fact, the practice had been sanctioned by the Church itself, and the most learned theologians had pronounced all barbarous and infidel nations, who shut their ears to the truths of Christianity, fair objects of war and rapine, of captivity and slavery. If Columbus needed any practical illustration of this doctrine, he had it in the conduct of Ferdinand himself, in his late wars with the Moors of Granada, in which he had always been surrounded by a crowd of ghostly advisers, and had professed to do everything for the glory and advancement of the Faith. In this Holy War, as it was termed, it was a common practice to make inroads into the Moorish territories and carry off *cavalgadas*, not merely of flocks and herds, but of human beings, and those not warriors taken with weapons in their hands, but quiet villagers, laboring peasantry,

and helpless women and children. These were carried to the mart at Seville, or to the other populous towns, and sold into slavery. The capture of Malaga was a memorable instance, where, as a punishment for an obstinate and brave defence, which should have excited admiration rather than revenge, eleven thousand people of both sexes, and of all ranks and ages, many of them highly cultivated and delicately reared, were suddenly torn from their homes, severed from each other, and swept into menial slavery, even though half of their ransoms had been paid. These circumstances are not advanced to vindicate, but to palliate, the conduct of Columbus. He acted but in conformity to the customs of the times, and was sanctioned by the example of the sovereigns under whom he served. Las Casas, the zealous and enthusiastic advocate of the Indians, who suffers no opportunity to escape him of exclaiming in vehement terms against their slavery, speaks with indulgence of Columbus on this head. If those pious and learned men, he observes, whom the sovereigns took for guides and instructors, were so ignorant of the injustice of this practice, it is no wonder that the unlettered Admiral should not be conscious of its impropriety.*

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, tom. i., cap. 122, MS.

Chapter VII.

EXPEDITION OF COLUMBUS AGAINST THE INDIANS OF THE VEGA—BATTLE.

[1494.]

NOTWITHSTANDING the defeat of the Indians by Ojeda, they still retained hostile intentions against the Spaniards. The idea of their cacique being a prisoner, and in chains, enraged the natives of Maguana ; and the general sympathy manifested by other tribes of the island shows how widely that intelligent savage had extended his influence, and how greatly he was admired. He had still active and powerful relatives remaining to attempt his rescue or revenge his fall. One of the brothers, Manicaotex by name, a Carib, bold and warlike as himself, succeeded to the sway over his subjects. His favorite wife also, Anacaona, so famous for her charms, had great influence over her brother Behechio, cacique of the populous province of Xaragua. Through these means a violent

and general hostility to the Spaniards was excited throughout the island, and the formidable league of the caciques, which Caonabo had in vain attempted to accomplish when at large, was produced by his captivity. Guacanagari, the cacique of Marien, alone remained friendly to the Spaniards, giving them timely information of the gathering storm, and offering to take the field with them as a faithful ally.

The protracted illness of Columbus, the scantiness of his military force, and the wretched state of the colonists in general, reduced by sickness and scarcity to great bodily weakness, had hitherto induced him to try every means of conciliation and strategem to avert and dissolve the confederacy. He had at length recovered his health, and his followers were in some degree refreshed and invigorated by the supplies brought by the ships. At this time he received intelligence, that the allied caciques were actually assembled in great force

SPANISH SOLDIER.

in the Vega, within two days' march of Isabella, with an intention of making a general assault upon the settlement, and overwhelming it by numbers. Columbus resolved to take the field at once, and to carry the war into the territories of the enemy, rather than suffer it to be brought to his own door.

SPANISH SOLDIER.

The whole sound and effective force that he could muster, in the present infirm state of the colony, did not exceed two hundred infantry and twenty horse. They were armed with crossbows, swords, lances, and espingardas, or heavy arquebuses, which in those days were used with rests, and sometimes mounted on wheels. With these formidable weapons, a handful of European warriors, cased in steel and covered in bucklers, were able to cope with thousands of naked savages. They had aid of another kind, however, consisting of twenty bloodhounds, animals scarcely less terrible to the Indians than

the horses, and infinitely more fatal. They were fearless and ferocious; nothing daunted them, nor when they had once seized upon their prey, could anything compel them to relinquish their hold. The naked bodies of the Indians offered no defence against their attacks. They sprang on them, dragged them to the earth, and tore them to pieces.

The Admiral was accompanied in the expedition by his brother Bartholomew, whose counsel and aid he sought on all occasions, and who had not merely great personal force and undaunted courage, but also a decidedly military turn of mind. Guacanagari also brought his people into the field; neither he nor his subjects, however, were of a warlike character, nor calculated to render much assistance. The chief advantage of his co-operation was, that it completely severed him from the other caciques, and insured the dependence of himself and his subjects upon the Spaniards. In the present infant state of the colony its chief security depended upon jealousies and dissensions sown among the native powers of the island.

On the 27th of March, 1495, Columbus issued forth from Isabella with his little army, and advanced by marches of ten leagues a day in quest of the enemy. He ascended again to

the mountain-pass of the Cavaliers, whence he had first looked down upon the Vega. With what different feelings did he now contemplate it. The vile passions of the white men had already converted this smiling, beautiful, and once peaceful and hospitable region, into a land of wrath and hostility. Wherever the smoke of an Indian town rose from among the trees, it marked a horde of exasperated enemies, and the deep rich forests below him swarmed with lurking warriors. In the picture which his imagination had drawn of the peaceful and inoffensive nature of his people, he had flattered himself with the idea of ruling over them as a patron and benefactor, but now he found himself compelled to assume the odious character of a conqueror.

The Indians had notice by their scouts of his approach, but though they had already had some slight experience of the warfare of the white men, they were confident from the vast superiority of their numbers, which, it is said, amounted to one hundred thousand men.* This is probably an exaggeration. As Indians never draw out into the open field in order of battle, but lurk among the forests, it is difficult to ascertain their force, and their rapid movements and sudden sallies and retreats

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 104, MS.

from various parts, together with the wild shouts and yells from opposite quarters of the woodlands, are calculated to give an exaggerated idea of their number. The army must, however, have been great, as it consisted of the combined forces of several caciques of this populous island. It was commanded by Manicaotex, the brother of Caonabo. The Indians, who were little skilled in numeration and incapable of reckoning beyond ten, had a simple mode of ascertaining and describing the force of an enemy by counting out a grain of maize or Indian corn for every warrior. When, therefore, the spies, who had watched from rocks and thickets the march of Columbus, came back with a mere handful of corn as the amount of his army, the caciques scoffed at the idea of so scanty a number making head against their countless multitude.*

Columbus drew near to the enemy about the place where the town of St. Jago has since been built. The Indian army, under Manicaotex, was posted on a plain interspersed with clusters of forest trees, now known as the Savanna of Matanza. Having ascertained the great force of the enemy, Don Bartholomew advised that their little army should be divided into detachments, and should attack the Indians at

* Las Casas, *ubi sup.*

the same moment from several quarters. This plan was adopted. The infantry separating into different bodies advanced suddenly from various directions with great din of drums and trumpets, and a destructive discharge of fire-arms from the covert of the trees. The Indians were thrown into complete confusion. An army seemed pressing upon them from every quarter, their fellow-warriors to be laid low with thunder and lightning from the forests. While driven together and confounded by these attacks, Alonso de Ojeda charged their main body impetuously with his troop of cavalry, cutting his way with lance and sabre. The horses bore down the terrified Indians, while their riders dealt their blows on all sides, unopposed. The bloodhounds at the same time rushed upon the naked savages, seizing them by the throat, dragging them to the earth and tearing out their bowels. The Indians, unaccustomed to large and fierce quadrupeds of any kind, were struck with horror when assailed by these ferocious animals. They thought the horses equally fierce and devouring. The contest, if such it might be called, was of short duration.

The Indians fled in every direction, with yells and howlings; some clambered to the top of rocks and precipices; whence they made

piteous supplications, and offers of complete submission; many were killed, many made prisoners, and the confederacy was, for the time, completely broken up and dispersed.

Guacanagari had accompanied the Spaniards into the field according to his promise, but he was little more than spectator of this battle or rather rout. He was not of a martial spirit, and both he and his subjects must have shrunk with awe at this unusual and terrific burst of war, even though on the part of their allies. His participation in the hostilities of the white men was never forgiven by the other caciques, and he returned to his dominions followed by the hatred and execrations of all the islanders.

Chapter VII.

SUBJUGATION OF THE NATIVES—IMPOSITION OF TRIBUTE.

[1494.]

COLUMBUS followed up his victory by making a military tour through various parts of the island, and reducing the natives to obedience. They made occasional attempts at opposition, but were easily checked. Ojeda's troop of cavalry was of great efficacy from the rapidity of its movements, the active intrepidity of its commander, and the terror inspired by the horses. There was no service too wild and hazardous for Ojeda. If any appearance of war arose in a distant part of the country, he would penetrate with his little squadron of cavalry through the depths of the forests, and fall like a thunderbolt upon the enemy, disconcerting all their combinations and enforcing implicit submission.

The Royal Vega was soon brought into subjection. Being an immense plain, perfectly level, it was easily overrun by the horsemen, whose appearance overawed the most populous villages. Guarionex, its sovereign cacique, was of a mild and placable character, and though he had been roused to war by the instigation of the neighboring chieftains, he readily submitted to the domination of the Spaniards. Manicaotex, the brother of Caonabo, was also obliged to sue for peace; and being the prime mover of the confederacy, the other caciques followed his example. Behechio alone, the cacique of Xaragua, and brother-in-law of Caonabo, made no overtures of submission. His territories lay remote from Isabella, at the western extremity of the island, around the deep bay called the Bight of Leogan, and the long peninsula called Cape Tiburon. They were difficult of access, and had not as yet been visited by the white men. He retired into his domains, taking with him his sister, the beautiful Anacoana, wife of Caonabo, whom he cherished with fraternal affection under her misfortunes, who soon acquired almost equal sway over his subjects with himself, and was destined subsequently to make some figure in the events of the island.

Having been forced to take the field by the confederacy of the caciques, Columbus now asserted the right of a conqueror, and considered how he might turn his conquest to most profit. His constant anxiety was to make wealthy returns to Spain, for the purpose of indemnifying the sovereigns for their great expenses; of meeting the public expectations, so extravagantly excited; and above all, of silencing the calumnies of those who had gone home determined to make the most discouraging representations of his discoveries. He endeavored therefore to raise a large and immediate revenue, by imposing heavy tributes on the subjected provinces. In those of the Vega, Cibao, and all the region of the mines, each individual above the age of fourteen years was required to pay, every three months, the measure of a Flemish hawk's-bell of gold-dust.* The caciques had to pay a much larger amount for their personal tribute. Manicaotex, the brother of Caonabo, was obliged indi-

* A hawk's-bell, according to Las Casas (*Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 105), contains about three *castallanos'* worth of gold-dust, equal to five dollars, and in estimating the superior value of gold in those days, equivalent to fifteen dollars of our time. A quantity of gold worth one hundred and fifty castellanos was equivalent to seven hundred and ninety-eight dollars of the present day.

vidually to render in, every three months, half a calabash of gold, amounting to one hundred and fifty *pesos*. In those districts which were distant from the mines, and produced no gold, each individual was required to furnish an *arroba* (twenty-five pounds) of cotton every three months. Each Indian, on rendering this tribute, received a copper medal as a certificate of payment, which he was to wear suspended round his neck ; those who were found without such documents were liable to arrest and punishment.

The taxes and tributes thus imposed bore hard upon the spirit of the natives, accustomed to be but lightly tasked by their caciques ; and the caciques themselves found the exactions intolerably grievous. Guarionex, the sovereign of the Royal Vega, represented to Columbus the difficulty he had in complying with the terms of his tribute. His richly fertile plain yielded no gold ; and though the mountains on his borders contained mines, and their brooks and torrents washed down gold-dust into the sands of the rivers, yet his subjects were not skilled in the art of collecting it. He proffered therefore, instead of the tribute required, to cultivate with grain a band of country stretching across the island from sea to sea, "enough," says La Casas, "to

have furnished all Castile with bread for ten years.''*

His offer was rejected. Columbus knew that gold alone would satisfy the avaricious dreams excited in Spain, and insure the popularity and success of his enterprise. Seeing however the difficulty that many of the Indians had in furnishing the amount of gold-dust required, he lowered the demand to the measure of one half of a hawk's-bell.

To enforce the payment of these tributes, and to maintain the subjection of the island, Columbus put the fortress already built in a strong state of defence, and erected others. Besides those of Isabella, and of St. Thomas, in the mountains of Cibao, there were now the fortress of Magdalena, in the Royal Vega, near the site of the old town of Santiago, on the river Jalaqua, two leagues from the place where the new town was afterwards built; another called Santa Catalina, the site of which is near the Estencia Yaqui; another called Esperanza, on the banks of the river Yaqui, facing the outlet of the mountain pass La Puerta de los Hidalgos, now the pass of Marney; but the most important of those recently erected was Fort Conception, in one of the most fruitful and beautiful parts of the

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 105.

Vega, about fifteen leagues to the east of Esperanza, controlling the extensive and populous domains of Guarionex.*

In this way was the yoke of servitude fixed upon the island, and its thraldom effectually insured. Deep despair now fell upon the natives when they found a perpetual task inflicted upon them, enforced at stated and frequently recurring periods. Weak and indolent by nature, unused to labor of any kind, and brought up in the untasked idleness of their soft climate and their fruitful groves, death itself seemed preferable to a life of toil and anxiety. They saw no end to this harassing evil, which had so suddenly fallen upon them; no escape from its all-pervading influence; no prospect of return to that roving independence and ample leisure, so dear to the wild inhabitants of the forest. The pleasant life of the island was at an end; the dream in the shade by day; the slumber during the sultry noontide heat by the fountain or the stream, or under the spreading palm-tree; and the song, the dance, and the game in the mellow evening, when summoned to their simple amusements by the rude Indian drum. They were now obliged to grope day by day, with bending body and anxious eye along the bor-

* Las Casas, *ubi sup.*, cap. 110.

ders of their rivers, sifting the sands for the grains of gold which every day grew more scanty; or to labor in their fields beneath the fervor of a tropical sun, to raise food for their taskmasters, or to produce the vegetable tribute imposed upon them. They sank to sleep weary and exhausted at night, with the certainty that the next day was but to be a repetition of the same toil and suffering. Or if they occasionally indulged in their national dances, the ballads to which they kept time were of a melancholy and plaintive character. They spoke of the times that were past, before the white men had introduced sorrow, and slavery, and weary labor among them; and they rehearsed pretended prophecies, handed down from their ancestors, foretelling the invasion of the Spaniards; that strangers should come into their island clothed in apparel, with swords capable of cleaving a man asunder at a blow, under whose yoke their posterity should be subdued. These ballads, or *areytos*, they sang with mournful tunes and doleful voices, bewailing the loss of their liberty, and their painful servitude.*

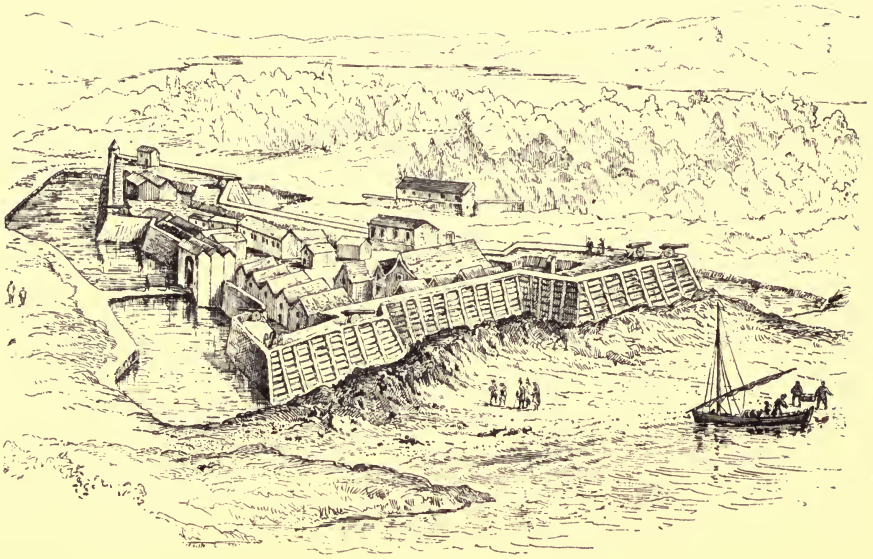
They had flattered themselves, for a time, that the visit of the strangers would be but temporary, and that spreading their ample

* Peter Martyr, decad. iii., lib. ix.

sails, their ships would once more bear them back to their home in the sky. In their simplicity they had repeatedly inquired when they intended to return to *Turey*, or the heavens. They now beheld them taking root, as it were, in the island. They beheld their vessels lying idle and rotting in the harbor, while the crews, scattered about the country, where building habitations and fortresses, the solid construction of which, unlike their own slight cabins, gave evidence of permanent abode.*

Finding how vain was all attempt to deliver themselves by warlike means from these invincible intruders, they now concerted a forlorn and desperate mode of annoyance. They perceived that the settlement suffered greatly from shortness of provisions, and depended, in a considerable degree, upon the supplies furnished by the natives. The fortresses in the interior, also, and the Spaniards quartered in the villages, looked almost entirely to them for subsistence. They agreed among themselves therefore not to cultivate the fruits, the roots, and maize, their chief articles of food, and to destroy those already growing; hoping, by producing a famine, to starve the strangers from the island. They little knew, observed Las Casas, one of the characteristics of the

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 106.



Spaniards, who, the more hungry they are, the more inflexible they become, and the more hardened to endure suffering.* They carried their plan generally into effect, abandoning their habitations, laying waste their fields and groves, and retiring to the mountains, where there were roots and herbs and abundance of utias for their subsistence.

This measure did indeed produce much distress among the Spaniards, but they had foreign resources, and were enabled to endure it by husbanding the partial supplies brought by their ships; the most disastrous effects fell upon the natives themselves. The Spaniards stationed in the various fortresses, finding that there was not only no hope of tribute, but a danger of famine from this wanton waste and sudden desertion, pursued the natives to their retreats to compel them to return to labor. The Indians took refuge in the most sterile and dreary heights, flying from one wild retreat to another, the women with their children in their arms or at their backs, and all worn out with fatigue and hunger and harassed by perpetual alarms. In every noise of the forest or

* "No conociendo la propriedad de los Españoles, los cuales cuanto mas hambrientos, tanto mayor teson tienen y mas duros son de sufrir y para sufrir."—Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 106.

the mountain they fancied they heard the sound of their pursuers; they hid themselves in damp and dismal caverns or in the rocky banks and margins of the torrents, and not daring to hunt or fish, or even to venture forth in quest of nourishing roots and vegetables, they had to satisfy their raging hunger with unwholesome food. In this way many thousands of them perished miserably through famine, fatigue, terror, and various contagious maladies engendered by their sufferings. All spirit of opposition was at length completely quelled. The surviving Indians returned in despair to their habitations and submitted humbly to the yoke. So deep an awe did they conceive of their conquerors that it is said a Spaniard might go singly and securely all over the island, and the natives would even transport him from place to place on their shoulders.*

Before passing on to other events it may be proper here to notice the fate of Guacanagari, as he makes no further appearance in the course of this history. His friendship for the Spaniards had severed him from his countrymen but did not exonerate him from the general woes of the island. His territories, like those of the other caciques, were subjected to a

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 106. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 60.

tribute, which his people, with the common repugnance to labor, found it difficult to pay. Columbus, who knew his worth, and could have protected him, was long absent either in the interior of the island or detained in Europe by his own wrongs. In the interval the Spaniards forgot the hospitality and services of Guacanagari, and his tribute was harshly exacted. He found himself overwhelmed with opprobrium from his countrymen at large, and assailed by the clamors and lamentations of his suffering subjects. The strangers whom he had succored in distress and taken as it were to the bosom of his native island, had become its tyrants and oppressors. Care and toil and poverty and strong-handed violence had spread their curses over the land, and he felt as if he had invoked them on his race. Unable to bear the hostility of his fellow caciques, the woes of his subjects, and the extortions of his ungrateful allies, he took refuge at last in the mountains, where he died obscurely and in misery.*

An attempt has been made by Oviedo to defame the character of this Indian prince; it is not for Spaniards however to excuse their own ingratitude by casting a stigma on his name. He appears to have always manifested

* Charlevoix, *Hist. St. Domingo*, lib. ii.

towards them that true friendship which shines brightest in the dark days of adversity. He might have played a nobler part, in making a stand with his brother caciques to drive these intruders from his native soil ; but he appears to have been fascinated by his admiration of the strangers and his personal attachment to Columbus. He was bountiful, hospitable, affectionate, and kind-hearted ; competent to rule a gentle and unwarlike people in the happier days of the island, but unfitted, through the softness of his nature, for the stern turmoil which followed the arrival of the white men.

Chapter VIII.

INTRIGUES AGAINST COLUMBUS IN THE COURT OF SPAIN—AGUADO SENT TO INVESTIGATE THE AFFAIRS OF HISPANIOLA.

[1495.]

WHILE Columbus was endeavoring to remedy the evils produced by the misconduct of Margarite, that recreant commander and his political coadjutor, Friar Boyle, were busy undermining his reputation in the court of Castile. They accused him of deceiving the sovereigns and the public by extravagant descriptions of the countries he had discovered; they pronounced the island of Hispaniola a source of expense rather than profit, and they drew a dismal picture of the sufferings of the colony, occasioned, as they said, by the oppressions of Columbus and his brothers. They charged them with tasking the community with excessive labor during a time of general sickness and debility; with stopping the rations of individuals on the

most trifling pretext, to the great detriment of their health; with wantonly inflicting severe corporal punishments on the common people, and with heaping indignities on Spanish gentlemen of rank. They said nothing however of the exigencies which had called for unusual labor, nor of the idleness and profligacy which required coercion and chastisement, nor of the seditious cabals of the Spanish cavaliers, who had been treated with indulgence rather than severity. In addition to these complaints they represented the state of confusion of the island, in consequence of the absence of the Admiral and the uncertainty which prevailed concerning his fate, intimating the probability of his having perished in his foolhardy attempts to explore unknown seas and discover unprofitable lands.

These prejudiced and exaggerated representations derived much weight from the official situations of Margarite and Friar Boyle. They were supported by the testimony of many discontented and factious idlers, who had returned with them to Spain. Some of these persons had connections of rank, who were ready to resent with Spanish haughtiness what they considered the arrogant assumptions of an ignoble foreigner. Thus the popularity of Columbus received a vital blow, and immedi-

ately began to decline. The confidence of the sovereigns also was impaired, and precautions were adopted which savor strongly of the cautious and suspicious policy of Ferdinand.

It was determined to send some person of trust and confidence who should take upon himself the government of the island in case of the continued absence of the Admiral, and who even in the event of his return, should inquire into the alleged evils and abuses, and remedy such as should appear really in existence. The person proposed for this difficult office was Diego Carillo, a commander of a military order; but as he was not immediately prepared to sail with the fleet of caravels about to depart with supplies the sovereigns wrote to Fonseca, the superintendent of Indian affairs, to send some trusty person with the vessels to take charge of the provisions with which they were freighted. These he was to distribute among the colonists under the supervision of the Admiral, or in case of his absence in presence of those in authority. He was also to collect information concerning the manner in which the island had been governed, the conduct of persons in office, the causes and authors of existing grievances, and the measures by which they were to be remedied. Having collected such information he was to return and

make report to the sovereigns; but in case he should find the Admiral at the island everything was to remain subject to his control.

There was another measure adopted by the sovereigns about this time, which likewise shows the declining favor of Columbus. On the 10th of April, 1495, a proclamation was issued, giving general permission to native-born subjects to settle in the island of Hispaniola, and to go on private voyages of discovery and traffic to the New World. This was granted, subject to certain conditions.

All vessels were to sail exclusively from the port of Cadiz, and under the inspection of officers appointed by the Crown. Those who embarked for Hispaniola without pay, and at their own expense, were to have lands assigned to them and to be provisioned for one year, with a right to retain such lands and all houses they might erect upon them. Of all gold which they might collect they were to retain one third for themselves and pay two thirds to the Crown. Of all other articles of merchandise, the produce of the island, they were to pay merely one tenth to the Crown. Their purchases were to be made in the presence of officers appointed by the sovereigns, and the royal duties paid into the hands of the King's receiver.

Each ship sailing on private enterprise was to take one or two persons named by the royal officers at Cadiz. One tenth of the tonnage of the ship was to be at the service of the Crown, free of charge. One tenth of whatever such ships should procure in the newly discovered countries, was to be paid to the Crown on their return. These regulations included private ships trading to Hispaniola with provisions.

For every vessel thus fitted out on private adventure, Columbus in consideration of his privilege of an eight of tonnage was to have the right to freight one on his own account.

The general license for voyages of discovery was made in consequence of the earnest application of Vicente Yañez Pinzon, and other able and intrepid navigators, most of whom had sailed with Columbus. They offered to make voyages at their own cost and hazard. The offer was tempting and well-timed. The government was poor, the expeditions of Columbus were expensive, yet their object was too important to be neglected. Here was an opportunity of attaining all the ends proposed, not merely without expense but with a certainty of gain. The permission therefore was granted, without consulting the opinion or the wishes of the Admiral. It was loudly complained of by him as an infringement of his privileges,

and as disturbing the career of regular and well-organized discovery, by the licentious and sometimes predatory enterprises of reckless adventurers. Doubtless much of the odium that has attached itself to the Spanish discoveries in the New World has arisen from the grasping avidity of private individuals.

Just at this juncture in the early part of April, while the interests of Columbus were in such a critical situation, the ships commanded by Torres arrived in Spain. They brought intelligence of the safe return of the Admiral to Hispaniola from his voyage along the southern coast of Cuba, with the evidence which he had collected to prove that it was the extremity of the Asiatic continent, and that he had penetrated to the borders of the wealthiest countries of the East. Specimens were likewise brought of the gold and the various animal and vegetable curiosities which he had procured in the course of his voyage. No arrival could have been more timely. It at once removed all doubts respecting his safety and obviated the necessity of part of the precautionary measures then on the point of being taken. The supposed discovery of the rich coast of Asia also threw a temporary splendor about his expedition, and again awakened the gratitude of the sovereigns. The effect was imme-

diately apparent in their measures. Instead of leaving it to the discretion of Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca to appoint whom he pleased to the commission of inquiry about to be sent out, they retracted that power and nominated Juan Aguado.

He was chosen because, on returning from Hispaniola, he had been strongly recommended to royal favor by Columbus. It was intended therefore as a mark of consideration to the latter to appoint as commissioner a person of whom he had expressed so high an opinion, and who, it was to be presumed, entertained for him a grateful regard.

Fonseca, in virtue of his official station as superintendent of the affairs of the Indies, and probably to gratify his growing animosity for Columbus, had detained a quantity of gold which Don Diego, brother to the Admiral, had brought on his own private account. The sovereigns wrote to him repeatedly, ordering him not to demand the gold, or if he had seized it, to return it immediately with satisfactory explanations, and to write to Columbus in terms calculated to soothe any angry feelings which he might have excited. He was ordered also to consult the persons recently arrived from Hispaniola in what manner he could yield satisfaction to the Admiral, and act

accordingly. Fonseca thus suffered one of the severest humiliations of an arrogant spirit, that of being obliged to make atonement for its arrogance. It quickened however the malice which he had conceived against the Admiral and his family. Unfortunately his official situation and the royal confidence which he enjoyed gave him opportunities of gratifying it subsequently in a thousand insidious ways.

While the sovereigns thus endeavored to avoid any act which might give umbrage to Columbus they took certain measures to provide for the tranquillity of the colony. In a letter to the Admiral they directed that the number of persons in the settlement should be limited to five hundred, a greater number being considered unnecessary for the service of the island, and a burdensome expense to the Crown. To prevent further discontents about provisions they ordered that the rations of individuals should be dealt out in portions every fifteen days; and that all punishment by short allowance or the stoppage of rations should be discontinued, as tending to injure the health of the colonists, who required every assistance of nourishing diet, to fortify them against the maladies incident to a strange climate.

An able and experienced metallurgist, named Pablo Belvis, was sent out in place

of the wrong-headed Firmin Cedo. He was furnished with all the necessary engines and implements for mining, assaying, and purifying the precious metals, and with liberal pay and privileges. Ecclesiastics were also sent to supply the place of Friar Boyle and of certain of his brethren who desired to leave the island. The instruction and conversion of the natives awakened more and more the solicitude of the Queen. In the ships of Torres a large number of Indians arrived who had been captured in the recent wars with the caciques. Royal orders had been issued that they should be sold as slaves in the markets of Andalusia, as had been the custom with respect to negroes taken on the coast of Africa, and to Moorish prisoners captured in the war with Granada. Isabella however had been deeply interested by the accounts given of the gentle and hospitable character of these islanders, and of their great docility. The discovery had been made under her immediate auspices; she looked upon these people as under her peculiar care, and she anticipated with pious enthusiasm the glory of leading them from darkness into the paths of light. Her compassionate spirit revolted at the idea of treating them as slaves, even though sanctioned by the customs of the time. Within five days after the royal order

for the sale a letter was written by the sovereigns to Bishop Fonseca, suspending that order until they could inquire into the cause for which the Indians had been made prisoners, and consult learned and pious theologians whether their sale would be justifiable in the eyes of God.* Much difference of opinion took place among divines on this important question; the Queen eventually decided it according to the dictates of her own pure conscience and charitable heart. She ordered that the Indians should be sent back to their native country, and enjoined that the islanders should be conciliated by the gentlest means, instead of being treated with severity. Unfortunately her orders came too late to Hispaniola to have the desired effect. The scenes of warfare and violence produced by the bad passions of the colonists and the vengeance of the natives were not to be forgotten, and mutual distrust and rankling animosity had grown up between them, which no after exertions could eradicate.

* Letter of the sovereigns to Fonseca. Navarrete, *Coleccion de los Viages*, i., 11, doc. 92.

Chapter IX.

ARRIVAL OF AGUADO AT ISABELLA—HIS ARROGANT CONDUCT—TEMPEST IN THE HARBOR.

[1495.]

JUAN AGUADO set sail from Spain towards the end of August, with four caravels well freighted with supplies of all kinds. Don Diego Columbus returned in this squadron to Hispaniola, and arrived at Isabella in the month of October while the Admiral was absent occupied in re-establishing the tranquillity of the interior. Aguado, as has already been shown, was under obligations to Columbus, who had distinguished him from among his companions and had recommended him to the favor of the sovereigns. He was however one of those weak men whose heads are turned by the least elevation. Puffed up by a little temporary power he lost sight, not merely of the respect and gratitude due to Columbus, but of the nature

and extent of his own commission. Instead of acting as an agent employed to collect information he assumed a tone of authority, as though the reins of government had been transferred into his hands. He interfered in public affairs; ordered various persons to be arrested; called to account the officers employed by the Admiral; and paid no respect to Don Bartholomew Columbus, who remained in command during the absence of his brother. The Adelantado, astonished at this presumption, demanded a sight of the commission under which he acted; but Aguado treated him with great haughtiness, replying that he would show it only to the Admiral. On second thoughts, however, lest there should be doubts in the public mind of his right to interfere in the affairs of the colony, he ordered his letter of credence from the sovereigns to be pompously proclaimed by sound of trumpet. It was brief but comprehensive, to the following purport: "Cavaliers, Esquires, and other persons, who by our orders are in the Indies, we send to you Juan Aguado, our groom of the chambers, who will speak to you on our part. We command you to give him faith and credit."

The report now circulated that the downfall of Columbus and his family was at hand, and

that an auditor had arrived empowered to hear and redress the grievances of the public. This rumor originated with Aguado himself, who threw out menaces of rigid investigations and signal punishments. It was a time of jubilee for offenders. Every culprit started up into an accuser; every one who by negligence or crime had incurred the wholesome penalties of the laws was loud in his clamors against the oppression of Columbus. There were ills enough in the colony, some incident to its situation, others produced by the misdeeds of the colonists, but all were ascribed to the mal-administration of the Admiral. He was made responsible alike for the evils produced by others and for his own stern remedies. All the old complaints were reiterated against him and his brothers, and the usual and illiberal cause given for their oppressions, that they were foreigners who sought merely their own interests and aggrandizement at the expense of the sufferings and the indignities of Spaniards.

Destitute of discrimination to perceive what was true and what false in these complaints, and anxious only to condemn, Aguado saw in everything conclusive testimony of the culpability of Columbus. He intimated, and perhaps thought, that the Admiral was keeping at a distance from Isabella through fear of

encountering his investigations. In the fulness of his presumption he even set out with a body of horse to go in quest of him. A vain and weak man in power is prone to employ satellites of his own description. The arrogant and boasting followers of Aguado, wherever they went spread rumors among the natives of the might and importance of their chief, and of the punishment he intended to inflict upon Columbus. In a little while the report circulated through the island that a new Admiral had arrived to administer the government, and that the former one was to be put to death.

The news of the arrival and of the insolent conduct of Aguado reached Columbus in the interior of the island ; he immediately hastened to Isabella to give him a meeting. Aguado, hearing of his approach, also returned there. As every one knew the lofty spirit of Columbus, his high sense of his services, and his jealous maintenance of his official dignity, a violent explosion was anticipated at the impending interview. Aguado also expected something of the kind, but, secure in his royal letter of credence, he looked forward with the ignorant audacity of a little mind to the result. The sequel showed how difficult it is for petty spirits to anticipate the

conduct of a man like Columbus in an extraordinary situation. His natural heat and impetuosity had been subdued by a life of trials; he had learned to bring his passions into subjection to his judgment; he had too true an estimate of his own dignity to enter into a contest with a shallow boaster like Aguado; above all he had a profound respect for the authority of the sovereigns; for in his enthusiastic spirit, prone to deep feelings of reverence, his loyalty was inferior only to his religion. He received Aguado therefore with grave and punctilious courtesy; and retorted upon him his own ostentatious ceremonial, ordering that the letter of credence should be again proclaimed by sound of trumpet in presence of the populace. He listened to it with solemn deference, and assured Aguado of his readiness to acquiesce in whatever might be the pleasure of his sovereigns.

This unexpected moderation, while it astonished the beholders, foiled and disappointed Aguado. He had come prepared for a scene of altercation, and had hoped that Columbus in the heat and impatience of the moment would have said or done something that might be construed into disrespect for the authority of the sovereigns. He endeavored in fact, some months afterwards, to procure from the

public notaries present a prejudicial statement of the interview; but the deference of the Admiral for the royal letter of credence had been too marked to be disputed, and all the testimonials were highly in his favor.*

Aguado continued to intermeddle in public affairs, and the respect and forbearance with which he was uniformly treated by Columbus, and the mildness of the latter in all his measures to appease the discontents of the colony, were regarded as proofs of his loss of moral courage. He was looked upon as a declining man and Aguado hailed as the lord of the ascendant. Every dastard spirit who had any lurking ill-will, any real or imaginary cause of complaint, now hastened to give it utterance; perceiving that in gratifying his malice he was promoting his interest, and that in vilifying the Admiral he was gaining the friendship of Aguado.

The poor Indians, too, harassed by the domination of the white men, rejoiced in the prospect of a change of rulers, vainly hoping that it might produce a mitigation of their sufferings. Many of the caciques who had promised allegiance to the Admiral after their defeat in the Vega now assembled at the house of Manicaotex, the brother of Caonabo, near the

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 18.

river Yaqui, where they joined in a formal complaint against Columbus, whom they considered the cause of all the evils which had sprung from the disobedience and the vices of his followers.

Aguado now considered the great object of his mission fulfilled. He had collected information sufficient as he thought to insure the ruin of the Admiral and his brothers, and he prepared to return to Spain. Columbus resolved to do the same. He felt that it was time to appear at court and dispel the cloud of calumny gathering against him. He had active enemies of standing and influence, who were seeking every occasion to throw discredit upon himself and his enterprises; and, stranger and foreigner as he was, he had no active friends at court to oppose their machinations. He feared that they might eventually produce an effect upon the royal mind fatal to the progress of discovery; he was anxious to return therefore and explain the real causes of the repeated disappointments with respect to profits anticipated from his enterprises. It is not one of the least singular traits in this history, that after having been so many years in persuading mankind that there was a new world to be discovered, he had almost equal trouble in proving to them the advantage of its discovery.

When the ships were ready to depart a terrible storm swept the island. It was one of those awful whirlwinds which occasionally rage within the tropics, and were called by the Indians "*furicanes*," or "*uricans*," a name they still retain with trifling variation. About midday a furious wind sprang up from the east, driving before it dense volumes of cloud and vapor. Encountering another tempest of wind from the west, it appeared as if a violent conflict ensued. The clouds were rent by incessant flashes, or rather streams of lightning. At one time they were piled up high in the sky, at another they swept to the earth, filling the air with a baleful darkness more dismal than the obscurity of midnight. Wherever the whirlwind passed, whole tracts of forests were shivered and stripped of their leaves and branches; those of gigantic size which resisted the blast were torn up by the roots and hurled to a great distance. Groves were rent from the mountain precipices, with vast masses of earth and rock, tumbling into the valleys with terrific noise, and choking the course of rivers. The fearful sounds in the air and on the earth, the pealing thunder, the vivid lightning, the howling of the wind, the crash of falling trees and rocks, filled every one with affright, and many thought that the end of the world was

at hand. Some fled to caverns for safety, for their frail houses were blown down, and the air was filled with the trunks and branches of trees, and even with fragments of rocks, carried along by the fury of the tempest. When the hurricane reached the harbor, it whirled the ships round as they lay at anchor, snapped their cables, and sank three of them with all who were on board. Others were driven about, dashed against each other, and tossed mere wrecks upon the shore by the swelling surges of the sea, which in some places rolled for three or four miles upon the land. The tempest lasted for three hours. When it passed away and the sun again appeared, the Indians regarded each other in mute astonishment and dismay. Never in their memory, nor in the traditions of their ancestors, had their island been visited by such a storm. They believed that the Deity had sent this fearful ruin to punish the cruelties and crimes of the white men; and declared that this people had moved the very air, the water, and the earth, to disturb their tranquil life, and to desolate their island.*

* Ramusio, tom. iii., p. 7. Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. iv.

Chapter X.

DISCOVERY OF THE MINES OF HAYNA.

[1496.]

IN the recent hurricane the four caravels of Aguado had been destroyed, together with two others which were in the harbor. The only vessel which survived was the *Niña*, and that in a very shattered condition. Columbus gave orders to have her immediately repaired and another caravel constructed out of the wreck of those which had been destroyed. While waiting until they should be ready for sea he was cheered by tidings of rich mines in the interior of the island, the discovery of which is attributed to an incident of a somewhat romantic nature.* A young Arragonian, named Miguel Diaz, in the service of the Adelantado, having a quarrel

* Oviedo, *Cronica de los Indias*, lib. ii., cap. 13.

with another Spaniard, fought with him and wounded him dangerously. Fearful of the consequences, he fled from the settlement, accompanied by five or six comrades, who had either been engaged in the affray or were personally attached to him. Wandering about the island, they came to an Indian village on the southern coast, near the mouth of the river Ozema, where the city of St. Domingo is at present situated. They were received with kindness by the natives and resided for some time among them. The village was governed by a female cacique, who soon conceived a strong attachment for the young Arragonian. Diaz was not insensible to her tenderness, a connection was formed between them, and they lived for some time very happily together.

The recollection of his country and his friends began at length to steal upon the thoughts of the young Spaniard. It was a melancholy lot to be exiled from civilized life and an outcast from among his countrymen. He longed to return to the settlement, but dreaded the punishment that awaited him from the austere justice of the Adelantado. His Indian bride, observing him frequently melancholy and lost in thought, penetrated the cause with the quick intelligence of female affection. Fearful that he would abandon her

and return to his countrymen, she endeavored to devise some means of drawing the Spaniards to that part of the island. Knowing that gold was their sovereign attraction, she informed Diaz of certain rich mines in the neighborhood, and urged him to persuade his countrymen to abandon the comparatively sterile and unhealthy vicinity of Isabella and settle upon the fertile banks of the Ozema, promising they should be received with the utmost kindness and hospitality by her nation.

Struck with the suggestion, Diaz made particular inquiries about the mines and was convinced that they abounded in gold. He noticed the superior fruitfulness and beauty of the country, the excellence of the river, and the security of the harbor at its entrance. He flattered himself that the communication of such valuable intelligence would make his peace at Isabella and obtain his pardon from the Adelantado. Full of these hopes, he procured guides from among the natives, and taking a temporary leave of his Indian bride, set out with his comrades through the wilderness for the settlement, which was about fifty leagues distant. Arriving there secretly he learnt to his great joy that the man whom he had wounded had recovered. He now presented himself boldly before the Adelantado, relying

that his tidings would earn his forgiveness. He was not mistaken. No news could have come more opportunely. The Admiral had been anxious to remove the settlement to a more healthy and advantageous situation. He was desirous also of carrying home some conclusive proof of the richness of the island as the most effectual means of silencing the cavils of his enemies. If the representations of Miguel Diaz were correct, here was a means of effecting both these purposes. Measures were immediately taken to ascertain the truth. The Adelantado set forth in person to visit the river Ozema, accompanied by Miguel Diaz, Francisco de Garay, and the Indian guides, and attended by a number of men well armed. They proceeded from Isabella to Magdalena, and thence across the Royal Vega to the fortress of Conception. Continuing on to the south they came to a range of mountains, which they traversed by a defile two leagues in length, and descended into another beautiful plain, which was called Bonao. Proceeding hence for some distance, they came to a great river called Hayna, running through a fertile country, all the streams of which abounded in gold. On the western bank of this river, and about eight leagues from its mouth, they found gold in greater quantities

and in larger particles than had yet been met with in any part of the island, not even excepting the province of Cibao. They made experiments in various places within the compass of six miles and always with success. The soil seemed to be generally impregnated with that metal, so that a common laborer, with little trouble, might find the amount of three drachms in the course of a day.* In several places they observed deep excavations in the form of pits, which looked as if the mines had been worked in ancient times, a circumstance which caused much speculation among the Spaniards, the natives having no idea of mining, but contenting themselves with the particles found on the surface of the soil or in the beds of the rivers.

The Indians of the neighborhood received the white men with their promised friendship, and in every respect the representations of Miguel Diaz were fully justified. He was not only pardoned, but received into great favor, and was subsequently employed in various capacities in the island, in all which he acquitted himself with great fidelity. He kept his faith with his Indian bride, by whom, according to Oviedo, he had two children.

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. ii., cap. 18. Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. iv.

Charlevoix supposes that they were regularly married, as the female cacique appears to have been baptized, being always mentioned by the Christian name of Catalina.*

When the Adelantado returned with this favorable report, and with specimens of ore, the anxious heart of the Admiral was greatly elated. He gave orders that a fortress should be immediately erected on the banks of the Hayna, in the vicinity of the mines, and that they should be diligently worked. The fancied traces of ancient excavations gave rise to one of his usual veins of golden conjectures. He had already surmised that Hispaniola might be the ancient Ophir. He now flattered himself that he had discovered the identical mines whence King Solomon had procured his gold for the building of the temple of Jerusalem. He supposed that his ships must have sailed by the gulf of Persia, and round Trapoban to this island,† which, according to his idea, lay opposite to the extreme end of Asia, for such he firmly believed the island of Cuba.

It is probable that Columbus gave free license to his imagination in these conjectures, which tended to throw a splendor about his

* Oviedo, *Cronica de los Ind.*, lib. ii., cap. 13. Charlevoix, *Hist. St. Domingo*, lib. ii., p. 146.

† Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. iv.

enterprises, and to revive the languishing interest of the public. Granting, however, the correctness of his opinion, that he was in the vicinity of Asia, an error by no means surprising in the imperfect state of geographical knowledge, all his consequent suppositions were far from extravagant. The ancient Ophir was believed to lie somewhere in the East, but its situation was a matter of controversy among the learned, and remains one of those conjectural questions about which too much has been written for it ever to be satisfactorily decided.

Book IX.

Chapter II.

RETURN OF COLUMBUS TO SPAIN WITH AGUADO.

[1496.]

THE new caravel, the *Santa Cruz*, being finished, and the *Niña* repaired, Columbus made every arrangement for immediate departure, anxious to be freed from the growing arrogance of Aguado and to relieve the colony from a crew of factious and discontented men. He appointed his brother, Don Bartholomew, to the command of the island, with the title, which he had already given him, of Adelantado; in case of his death he was to be succeeded by his brother Don Diego.

On the 10th of March the two caravels set sail for Spain, in one of which Columbus embarked and in the other Aguado. In consequence of the orders of the sovereigns all those who could be spared from the island, and some

who had wives and relatives in Spain whom they wished to visit, returned in these caravels, which were crowded with two hundred and twenty-five passengers, the sick, the idle, the profligate, and the factious. Never did a more miserable and disappointed crew return from a land of promise.

There were thirty Indians also on board of the caravels, among whom were the once redoubtable Cacique Caonabo, one of his brothers, and a nephew. The Curate of Los Palacios observes that Columbus had promised the Cacique and his brother to restore them to their country and their power after he had taken them to visit the King and Queen of Castile.* It is probable that by kind treatment and by a display of the wonders of Spain and the grandeur and might of its sovereigns, he hoped to conquer their enmity to the Spaniards, and convert them into important instruments toward obtaining a secure and peaceable dominion over the island. Caonabo however was of that proud nature, of wild but vigorous growth, which can never be tamed. He remained a moody and dejected captive. He had too much intelligence not to perceive that his power was forever blasted, but he retained his haughtiness even in the midst of his despair.

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 131.

Being as yet but little experienced in the navigation of these seas, Columbus, instead of working up to the northward, so as to fall in with the track of westerly winds, took an easterly course on leaving the island. The consequence was that almost the whole of his voyage was a toilsome and tedious struggle against the trade-winds and calms which prevail between the tropics. On the 6th of April he found himself still in the vicinity of the Caribbee Islands, with his crews fatigued and sickly and his provisions rapidly diminishing. He bore away to the southward, therefore, to touch at the most important of those islands, in search of supplies.

On Saturday, the 9th, he anchored at Marigalante, whence on the following day he made sail for Guadaloupe. It was contrary to the custom of Columbus to weigh anchor on Sunday when in port, but the people murmured, and observed that when in quest of food it was no time to stand on scruples as to holy days.*

Anchoring off the island of Guadaloupe, the boat was sent on shore well armed. Before it could reach the land a large number of females issued from the woods, armed with bows and arrows and decorated with tufts of feathers, preparing to oppose any descent upon their

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 62.

shores. As the sea was somewhat rough and a surf broke upon the beach the boats remained at a distance, and two of the Indians from Hispaniola swam to shore. Having explained to these Amazons that the Spaniards only sought provisions, in exchange for which they would give articles of great value, the women referred them to their husbands, who were at the northern end of the island. As the boats proceeded thither numbers of the natives were seen on the beach, who manifested great ferocity, shouting and yelling and discharging flights of arrows, which however fell far short in the water. Seeing the boats approach the land, they hid themselves in the adjacent forest and rushed forth with hideous cries as the Spaniards were landing. A discharge of fire-arms drove them to the woods and mountains, and the boats met with no further opposition. Entering the deserted habitations the Spaniards began to plunder and destroy, contrary to the invariable injunctions of the Admiral. Among other articles found in these houses were honey and wax, which Herrera supposes had been brought from *terra firma* as these roving people collected the productions of distant regions in the course of their expeditions. Fernando Columbus mentions likewise that there were hatchets of iron in their houses;

these however must have been made of a species of hard and heavy stone, already mentioned, which resembled iron; or they must have been procured from places which the Spaniards had previously visited, as it is fully admitted that no iron was in use among the natives prior to the discovery. The sailors also reported that in one of the houses they found the arm of a man roasting on a spit before the fire; but these facts, so repugnant to humanity, require more solid authority to be credited; the sailors had committed wanton devastations in these dwellings, and may have sought a pretext with which to justify their maraudings to the Admiral.

While some of the people were getting wood and water and making cassava bread, Columbus despatched forty men, well armed, to explore the interior of the island. They returned on the following day with ten women and three boys. The women were of large and powerful form, yet of great agility. They were naked and wore their long hair flowing loose upon their shoulders; some decorated their heads with plumes of various colors. Among them was the wife of a cacique, a woman of great strength and proud spirit. On the approach of the Spaniards she had fled with an agility which soon left all her pursuers far

behind excepting a native of the Canary Islands remarkable for swiftness of foot. She would have escaped even from him, but perceiving that he was alone and far from his companions, she turned suddenly upon him, seized him with astonishing force, and would have strangled him had not the Spaniards arrived and taken her entangled like a hawk with her prey. The warlike spirit of these Carib women and the circumstance of finding them in armed bands, defending their shores during the absence of their husbands, led Columbus repeatedly into the erroneous idea that certain of these islands were inhabited entirely by women; for which error, as has already been observed, he was prepared by the stories of Marco Polo concerning an island of Amazons near the coast of Asia.

Having remained several days at the island and prepared three weeks' supply of bread, Columbus prepared to make sail. As Guadaloupe was the most important of the Caribbee Islands, and in a manner the portal or entrance to all the rest, he wished to secure the friendship of the inhabitants. He dismissed therefore all the prisoners, with many presents, to compensate for the spoil and injury which had been done. The female cacique however declined going on shore, preferring to remain

and accompany the natives of Hispaniola who were on board, keeping with her also a young daughter. She had conceived a passion for Caonabo, having found out that he was a native of the Caribbee Islands. His character and story, gathered from the other Indians, had won the sympathy and admiration of this intrepid woman.*

Leaving Guadaloupe on the 20th of April, and keeping in about the twenty-second degree of latitude, the caravels again worked their way against the whole current of the trade-winds, insomuch, that, on the 20th of May, after a month of great fatigue and toil, they had yet a great part of their voyage to make. The provisions were already so reduced, that Columbus had to put every one on a daily allowance of six ounces of bread and a pint and a half of water: as they advanced, the scarcity grew more and more severe, and was rendered more appalling from the uncertainty which prevailed on board the vessels as to their situation. There were several pilots in the caravels; but being chiefly accustomed to the navigation of the Mediterranean or Atlantic coasts, they were utterly confounded, and lost all reckoning when traversing the broad ocean. Every one had a separate opinion, and none

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 63.

heeded that of the Admiral. By the beginning of June there was an absolute famine on board of the ships. In the extremity of their sufferings, while death stared them in the face, it was proposed by some of the Spaniards, as a desperate alternative, that they should kill and eat their Indian prisoners; others suggested that they should throw them into the sea, as so many expensive and useless mouths. Nothing but the absolute authority of Columbus prevented this last counsel from being adopted. He represented that the Indians were their fellow-beings, some of them Christians like themselves, and all entitled to similar treatment. He exhorted them to a little patience, assuring them that they would soon make land, for that, according to his reckoning, they were not far from Cape St. Vincent. At this all scoffed, for they believed themselves yet far from their desired haven; some affirming that they were in the English Channel, others that they were approaching Galicia; when Columbus, therefore, confident in his opinion, ordered that sail should be taken in at night, lest they should come upon the land in the dark, there was a general murmur; the men exclaiming that it was better to be cast on shore, than to starve at sea. The next morning, however, to their great joy, they came in

sight of the very land which Columbus had predicted. From this time, he was regarded by the seamen as deeply versed in the mysteries of the ocean, and almost oracular in matters of navigation.*

On the 11th of June the vessels anchored in the bay of Cadiz, after a very weary voyage of about three months. In the course of this voyage, the unfortunate Caonabo expired. It is by the mere casual mention of contemporary writers, that we have any notice of this circumstance, which appears to have been passed over as a matter of little moment. He maintained his haughty nature to the last, for his death is principally ascribed to the morbid melancholy of a proud but broken spirit.† He was an extraordinary character in savage life. From being a simple Carib, he had risen, by his enterprise and courage, to be the most powerful cacique, and the dominant spirit of the populous island of Hayti. He was the only chieftain that appeared to have had sagacity

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 63.

† Cura de los Palacios, cap. 131. Peter Martyr, decad. i., lib. iv. Some have affirmed that Caonabo perished in one of the caravels which foundered in the harbor of Isabella during the hurricane, but the united testimony of the Curate of Los Palacios, Peter Martyr, and Fernando Columbus, proves that he sailed with the Admiral on his return voyage.

sufficient to foresee the fatal effects of Spanish ascendancy, or military talent to combine any resistance to its inroads. Had his warriors been of his own intrepid nature, the war which he raised would have been formidable in the extreme. His fate furnishes, on a narrow scale, a lesson to human greatness. When the Spaniards first arrived on the coast of Hayti, their imaginations were inflamed with rumors of a magnificent prince in the interior, the lord of the Golden House, the sovereign of the mines of Cibao, who reigned in splendid state among the mountains; but a short time had elapsed, and this fancied potentate of the East, stripped of every allusion, was a naked and dejected prisoner on the deck of one of their caravels, with none, but one of his own wild native heroines, to sympathize in his misfortunes. All his importance vanished with his freedom; scarce any mention is made of him during his captivity, and with innate qualities of a high and heroic nature, he perished with the obscurity of one of the vulgar.

Chapter III.

DECLINE OF THE POPULARITY OF COLUMBUS IN SPAIN—HIS RECEPTION BY THE SOVEREIGNS AT BURGOS—HE PROPOSES A THIRD VOYAGE.

ENVY and malice had been too successful in undermining the popularity of Columbus. It is impossible to keep up a state of excitement for any length of time, even by miracles. The world at first is prompt and lavish in its admiration, but soon grows cool, distrusts its late enthusiasm, and fancies it has been defrauded of what it bestowed with such prodigality. It is then that the caviller who has been silenced by the general applause, puts in his insidious suggestion, detracts from the merit of the declining favorite, and succeeds in rendering him an object of doubt and censure, if not of absolute aversion. In three short years the public had become familiar with the stupendous wonder of a newly discovered world, and was now open to

every insinuation derogatory to the fame of the discoverer and the importance of his enterprises.

The circumstances which attended the present arrival of Columbus were little calculated to diminish the growing prejudices of the populace. When the motley crowd of mariners and adventurers who had embarked with such sanguine expectations landed from the vessels in the port of Cadiz, instead of a joyous crew bounding on shore flushed with success, and laden with the spoils of the golden Indies, a feeble train of wretched men crawled forth, emaciated by the diseases of the colony and the hardships of the voyage, who carried in their yellow countenances, says an old writer, a mockery of that gold which had been the object of their search, and who had nothing to relate of the New World, but tales of sickness, poverty, and disappointment.

Columbus endeavored as much as possible to counteract these unfavorable appearances, and to revive the languishing enthusiasm of the public. He dwelt upon the importance of his recent discoveries along the coast of Cuba, where, as he supposed, he had arrived nearly to the Aurea Chersonesus of the ancients, bordering on some of the richest provinces of Asia. Above all he boasted of his discovery of the

abundant mines on the south side of Hispaniola, which he persuaded himself were those of the ancient Ophir. The public listened to these accounts with sneering incredulity ; or if for a moment a little excitement was occasioned, it was quickly destroyed by the gloomy pictures drawn by disappointed adventurers.

In the harbor of Cadiz Columbus found three caravels, commanded by Pedro Alonzo Niño, on the point of sailing with supplies for the colony. Nearly a year had elapsed without any relief of the kind ; four caravels which had sailed in the preceding January having been lost on the coast of the Peninsula.* Having read the royal letters and despatches of which Niño was the bearer, and being informed of the wishes of the sovereigns, as well as of the state of the public mind, Columbus wrote by this opportunity, urging the Adelantado to endeavor by every means to bring the island into a peaceful and productive state, appeasing all discontents and commotions, and seizing and sending to Spain all caciques or their subjects who should be concerned in the deaths of any of the colonists. He recommended the most unremitting diligence in exploring and working the mines recently discovered on the river Hayna, and that a place should be chosen

* Muñoz, *Hist. N. Mundo*, lib. vi.

in the neighborhood and a seaport founded. Pedro Alonzo Niño set sail with the three caravels on the 17th of June.

Tidings of the arrival of Columbus having reached the sovereigns, he received a gracious letter from them dated at Almazen, 12th July, 1496, congratulating him on his safe return, and inviting him to court when he should have recovered from the fatigues of his voyage. The kind terms in which this letter was couched were calculated to reassure the heart of Columbus, who, ever since the mission of the arrogant Aguado, had considered himself out of favor with the sovereigns and fallen into disgrace. As a proof of the dejection of his spirits we are told that when he made his appearance this time in Spain he was clad in a humble garb, resembling in form and color the habit of a Franciscan monk, simply girded with a cord, and that he had suffered his beard to grow like the brethren of that order.* This was probably in fulfilment of some penitential vow made in a moment of danger or despondency,—a custom prevalent in those days and frequently observed by Columbus. It betokened, however, much humility and depression of spirit, and afforded a striking contrast to his appearance on his

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 131. Oviedo, lib. ii., cap. 13.

former triumphant return. He was doomed, in fact, to yield repeated examples of the reverses to which those are subject who have once launched from the safe shores of obscurity on the fluctuating waves of popular opinion.

However indifferent Columbus might be to his own personal appearance he was anxious to keep alive the interest in his discoveries, fearing continually that the indifference awakening towards him might impede their accomplishment. On his way to Burgos, therefore, where the sovereigns were expected, he made a studious display of the curiosities and treasures which he had brought from the New World. Among these were collars, bracelets, anklets, and coronets of gold, the spoils of various caciques, and which were considered as trophies won from barbaric princes of the rich coasts of Asia or the islands of the Indian seas. It is a proof of the petty standard by which the sublime discovery of Columbus was already estimated, that he had to resort to this management to dazzle the gross perceptions of the multitude by the mere glare of gold.

He carried with him several Indians also, decorated after their savage fashion, and glittering with golden ornaments, among whom were the brother and nephew of Caonabo, the former about thirty years of age, the latter

only ten. They were brought merely to visit the King and Queen, that they might be impressed with an idea of the grandeur and power of the Spanish sovereigns, after which they were to be restored in safety to their country. Whenever they passed through any principal place Columbus put a massive collar and chain of gold upon the brother of Caonabo, as being cacique of the golden country of Cibao. The Curate of Los Palacios, who entertained the discoverer and his Indian captives for several days in his house, says that he had this chain of gold in his hands and that it weighed six hundred *castallanos*.* The worthy curate likewise makes mention of various Indian masks and images of wood or cotton wrought with fantastic faces of animals, all of which he supposed were representations of the devil, who, he concludes, must be the object of adoration of these islanders.†

The reception of Columbus by the sovereigns was different from what he had anticipated, for he was treated with distinguished favor, nor was any mention made either of the complaints of Margarite and Boyle, or the judicial inquiries conducted by Aguado. How-

* Equivalent to the value of three thousand one hundred and ninety-five dollars of the present time.

† Cura de los Palacios, cap. 131.

ever these may have had a transient effect on the minds of the sovereigns, they were too conscious of the great deserts of Columbus and the extraordinary difficulties of his situation, not to tolerate what they may have considered errors on his part.

Encouraged by the favorable countenance he experienced, and by the interest with which the sovereigns listened to his account of his recent voyage along the coast of Cuba, and the discovery of the mines of Hayna, which he failed not to represent as the Ophir of the ancients, Columbus now proposed a further enterprise, by which he promised to make yet more extensive discoveries, and to annex Terra Firma to their dominions. For this purpose he asked eight ships, two to be despatched to the island of Hispaniola with supplies, the remaining six to be put under his command for a voyage of discovery. The sovereigns readily promised to comply with his request, and were probably sincere in their intentions to do so, but in the performance of their promise Columbus was doomed to meet with intolerable delay; partly in consequence of the operation of public events, partly in consequence of the intrigues of men in office—the two great influences which are continually diverting and defeating the designs of princes.

The resources of Spain were at this moment tasked to the utmost by the ambitions of Ferdinand, who lavished all his revenues in warlike expenses and subsidies. While maintaining a contest of deep and artful policy with France, with the ultimate aim of grasping the sceptres of Naples, he was laying the foundation of a wide and powerful connection by the marriages of the royal children, who were now maturing in years. At this time arose the family alliance which afterwards consolidated such an immense empire under his grandson and successor, Charles V.

While a large army was maintained in Italy under Gonsalvo of Cordova, to assist the King of Naples in recovering his throne, of which he had been suddenly dispossessed by Charles VIII. of France, other armies were required on the frontiers of Spain, which were menaced with a French invasion. Squadrons also had to be employed for the safeguard of the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts of the Peninsula, while a magnificent *armada* of upwards of a hundred ships, having on board twenty thousand persons, many of them of the first nobility, was despatched to convoy the Princess Juan to Flanders, to be married to Philip, Archduke of Austria, and to bring back his sister Margarita, the destined bride of Prince Juan.

These widely extended operations, both of war and amity, put all the land and naval forces into requisition. They drained the royal treasury and engrossed the thoughts of the sovereigns, obliging them also to journey from place to place in their dominions. With such cares of an immediate and homefelt nature pressing upon their minds the distant enterprises of Columbus were easily neglected or postponed. They had hitherto been sources of expense instead of profit, and there were artful counsellors ever ready to whisper in the royal ear that they were likely to continue so. What, in the ambitious eyes of Ferdinand, was the acquisition of a number of wild, uncultivated, and distant islands to that of the brilliant domain of Naples; or the intercourse with naked and barbarous princes to that of an alliance with the most potent sovereigns of Christendom? Columbus had the mortification, therefore, to see armies levied and squadrons employed in idle contests about a little point of territory in Europe, and a vast *armada* of upwards of a hundred sail destined to the ostentatious service of convoying a royal bride; while he vainly solicited a few caravels to prosecute his discovery of a world.

At length in the autumn six millions of *maravedis* were ordered to be advanced to Co-

lumbus for the equipment of his promised squadron.* Just as the sum was about to be delivered a letter was received from Pedro Alonzo Niño, who had arrived at Cadiz with his three caravels on his return from the island of Hispaniola. Instead of proceeding to court in person, or forwarding the despatches of the Adelantado, he had gone to visit his family at Huelva, taking the despatches with him, and merely writing in a vaunting style that he had a great amount of gold on board his ships.†

This was triumphant intelligence to Columbus, who immediately concluded that the new mines were in operation and the treasures of Ophir about to be realized. The letter of Niño, however, was fated to have a most injurious effect on his concerns.

The King at that moment was in immediate want of money to repair the fortress of Salza in Roussillon, which had been sacked by the French; the six millions of *maravedis* about to be advanced to Columbus were forthwith appropriated to patch up the shattered castle, and an order was given for the amount to be paid out of the gold brought by Niño. It was not until the end of December, when Niño arrived at court and delivered the despatches of

* Equivalent to 86,956 dollars of the present day.

† Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 123, MS.

the Adelantado, that his boast of gold was discovered to be a mere figure of speech, and that his caravels were in fact freighted with Indian prisoners, from the sale of whom the vaunted gold was to arise.

It is difficult to describe the vexatious effects of this absurd hyperbole. The hopes of Columbus of great and immediate profit from the mines were suddenly cast down; the zeal of his few advocates was cooled; an air of empty exaggeration was given to his enterprises; and his enemies pointed with scorn and ridicule to the wretched cargoes of the caravels, as the boasted treasures of the New World. The report brought by Niño and his crew represented the colony as in a disastrous condition, and the despatches of the Adelantado pointed out the importance of immediate supplies; but in proportion as the necessity of the case was urgent the measure of relief was tardy. All the unfavorable representations hitherto made seemed corroborated, and the invidious cry of "great cost and little gain" was revived by those politicians of petty sagacity and microscopic eye, who, in all great undertakings, can discern the immediate expense without having scope of vision to embrace the future profit.

Chapter III.

PREPARATIONS FOR A THIRD VOYAGE—DISAPPOINTMENTS AND DELAYS.

[1497.]

IT was not until the following spring of 1497 that the concerns of Columbus and of the New World began to receive serious attention from the sovereigns. The fleet had returned from Flanders with Princess Margarita of Austria. Her nuptials with Prince Juan, the heir-apparent, had been celebrated at Burgos, the capital of Old Castile, with extraordinary splendor. All the grandees, the dignitaries, and chivalry of Spain, together with ambassadors from the principal potentates of Christendom, were assembled on the occasion. Burgos was for some time a scene of chivalrous pageant and courtly revel, and the whole kingdom celebrated with great rejoicings this powerful alliance, which seemed to ensure to the Spanish sovereigns a continuance of their extraordinary prosperity.

In the midst of these festivities Isabella, whose maternal heart had recently been engrossed by the marriages of her children, now that she was relieved from these concerns of a tender and domestic nature, entered into the affairs of the New World with a spirit that showed she was determined to place them upon a substantial foundation, as well as clearly to define the powers and reward the services of Columbus. To her protecting zeal all the provisions in favor of Columbus must be attributed; for the King began to look coldly on him, and the royal counsellors, who had most influence in the affairs of the Indies, were his enemies.

Various royal ordinances dated about this time manifest the generous and considerate disposition of the Queen. The rights, privileges, and dignities granted to Columbus at Santa Fé was again confirmed; a tract of land at Hispaniola, fifty leagues in length and twenty-five in breadth, was offered to him with the title of duke or marquess. This however Columbus had the forbearance to decline; he observed that it would only increase the envy which was already so virulent against him, and would cause new misrepresentations, as he should be accused of paying more attention to the settlement and improvement of his own

possessions than of any other part of the island.*

As the expenses of the expeditions had hitherto far exceeded the returns, Columbus had incurred debt rather than reaped profit from the share he had been permitted to take in them; he was relieved therefore from his obligation to bear an eighth part of the cost of the past enterprises, excepting the sum which he had advanced towards the first voyage; at the same time however he was not to claim any share of what had hitherto been brought from the island. For three ensuing years he was to be allowed an eighth of the gross proceeds of every voyage and an additional tenth after the costs had been deducted. After the expiration of the three years the original terms of agreement were to be resumed.

To gratify his honorable ambition also and to perpetuate in his family the distinction gained by his illustrious deeds, he was allowed the right of establishing a *mayorazgo*, or perpetual entail of his estates, so that they might always descend with his titles of nobility. This he shortly after exercised in a solemn testament executed at Seville in the early part of 1498, by which he devised his estates to his

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 123.

own male descendants, and on their failure to the male descendants of his brothers, and in default of male heirs to the females of his lineage.

The heir was always to bear the arms of the Admiral, to seal with them, to sign with his signature, and in signing never to use any other title than simply "The Admiral," whatever other titles might be given him by the King, and used by him on other occasions. Such was the noble pride with which he valued this title of his real greatness.

In this testament he made ample provision for his brother the Adelantado, his son Fernando, and his brother Don Diego, the last of whom, he intimates, had a desire to enter into ecclesiastical life. He ordered that a tenth part of the revenues arising from the *mayorazgo* should be devoted to pious and charitable purposes, and in relieving all poor persons of his lineage. He made provisions for the giving of marriage portions to the poor females of his family. He ordered that a married person of his kindred who had been born in his native city of Genoa should be maintained there in competence and respectability, by way of keeping a domicil for the family there; and he commanded whoever should inherit the *mayorazgo* always to do everything in his power

for the honor, prosperity, and increase of the city of Genoa, provided it should not be contrary to the service of the Church and the interests of the Spanish Crown. Among various other provisions in his will he solemnly provides for his favorite scheme, the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. He orders his son Diego, or whoever else may inherit his estate, to invest from time to time as much money as he can spare, in stock in the bank of St. George at Genoa, to form a permanent fund with which he is to stand ready at any time to follow and serve the King in the conquest of Jerusalem. Or should the King not undertake such an enterprise, then when the funds have accumulated to sufficient amount, to set on foot a crusade at his own charge and risk, in hopes that, seeing his determination, the sovereigns may be induced either to adopt the undertaking, or to authorize him to pursue it in their name.

Beside this special undertaking for the Catholic Faith he charges his heir in case there should arise any schism in the Church, or any violence menacing its prosperity, to throw himself at the feet of the Pope, and devote his person and property to defend the Church from all insult and spoliation. Next to the service of God he enjoins loyalty to the throne; commanding him at all times to serve the

sovereigns and their heirs faithfully and zealously, even to the loss of life and estate. To insure the constant remembrance of this testament he orders his heir that, before he confesses, he shall give it to his father confessor to read, who is to examine him upon his faithful fulfilment of its conditions.*

As Columbus had felt aggrieved by the general license granted in April, 1495, to make discoveries in the New World, considering it as interfering with his prerogatives, a royal edict was issued on the 2d of June, 1497, retracting whatever might be prejudicial to his interests, or to the previous grants made him by the Crown. "It was never our intention," said the sovereigns in their edict, "in any way to affect the rights of the said Don Christopher Columbus, nor to allow the conventions, privileges, and favors which we have granted him to be encroached upon or violated; but, on the contrary, in consequence of the services which he has rendered us, we intend to confer still further favors on him." Such, there is every reason to believe, was the sincere intention of the magnanimous Isabella; but the stream of her royal bounty was poisoned or diverted by the base channels through which it flowed.

The favor shown to Columbus was extended

* This testament is inserted at large in the Appendix.

likewise to his family. The titles and prerogatives of Adelantado with which he had invested his brother Don Bartholomew, had at first awakened the displeasure of the King, who jealously reserved all high dignities of the kind to be granted exclusively by the Crown. By a royal letter, the office was now conferred upon Don Bartholomew, as if through spontaneous favor of the sovereigns, no allusion being made to his having previously enjoyed it.

While all these measures were taken for the immediate gratification of Columbus, others were adopted for the interests of the colony. Permission was granted him to take out three hundred and thirty persons in royal pay, of whom forty were to be *escuderos* or servants, one hundred foot-soldiers, thirty sailors, thirty ship-boys, twenty miners, fifty husbandmen, ten gardeners, twenty mechanics of various kinds, and thirty females. He was subsequently permitted to increase the number, if he thought proper, to five hundred; but the additional individuals were to be paid out of the produce and merchandise of the colony. He was likewise authorized to grant lands to all such as were disposed to cultivate vineyards, orchards, sugar plantations, or to form any other rural establishments, on condition that they should reside as householders on the

island for four years after such grant; and that all the brazil-wood and precious metals, found on their lands, should be reserved to the Crown.

Nor were the interests of the unhappy natives forgotten by the compassionate heart of Isabella. Notwithstanding the sophisms by which their subjection and servitude were made matters of civil and divine right, and sanctioned by the political prelates of the day, Isabella always consented with the greatest reluctance to the slavery even of those who were taken in open warfare; while her utmost solicitude was exerted to protect the unoffending part of this helpless and devoted race. She ordered that the greatest care should be taken of their religious instruction, and the greatest leniency shown in collecting the tributes imposed upon them, with all possible indulgence to defalcators. In fact, the injunctions given with respect to the treatment both of Indians and Spaniards, are the only indications, in the royal edicts, of any impression having been made by the complaints against Columbus of severity in his government. It was generally recommended by the sovereigns that whenever the public safety did not require stern measures, there should be manifested a disposition to lenity and easy rule.

When every intention was thus shown on the part of the Crown to despatch the expedition to the colony, unexpected difficulties arose on the part of the public. The charm was dispelled which in the preceding voyage had made every adventurer crowd into the service of Columbus. An odium had been industriously thrown upon his enterprises; and his new-found world, instead of a region of wealth and delight, was considered a land of poverty and disaster. There was a difficulty in procuring either ships or men for the voyage. To remedy the first of these deficiencies, one of those arbitrary orders was issued, so opposite to our present ideas of commercial policy, empowering the officers of the Crown to press into the service whatever ships they might judge suitable for the purposed expedition, together with their masters and pilots; and to fix such price for their remuneration as the officers should deem just and reasonable. To supply the want of voluntary recruits, a measure was adopted at the suggestion of Columbus,* which shows the desperate alternatives to which he was reduced by the great reaction of public sentiment. This was to commute the sentences of criminals condemned to banishment, to the galleys, or to the mines, into transporta-

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 112, MS.

tion to the new settlements, where they were to labor in the public service without pay. Those whose sentence was banishment for life, to be transported for ten years ; those banished for a specific term, to be transported for half that time. A general pardon was published for all malefactors at large who within a certain time should surrender themselves to the Admiral, and embark for the colonies ; those who had committed offences meriting death, to serve for two years, those whose misdeeds were of a lighter nature to serve for one year.* Those only were excepted from this indulgence who had committed heresy, treason, coining, murder, and certain other specific crimes. This pernicious measure, calculated to poison the population of an infant community at its very source, was a fruitful cause of trouble to Columbus, and of misery and detriment to the colony. It has been frequently adopted by various nations, whose superior experience should have taught them better, and has proved the bane of many a rising settlement. It is assuredly as unnatural for a metropolis to cast forth its crimes and vices upon its colonies, as it would be for a parent wilfully to ingraft disease upon his children. In both instances the obligation of nature is vitiated ; nor should it be matter

* Muñoz, lib. vi., § 19.

of surprise, if the seeds of evil thus sown should bring forth bitter retribution.

Notwithstanding all these violent expedients there was still a ruinous delay in fitting out the expedition. This is partly accounted for by changes which took place in the persons appointed to superintend the affairs of the Indies. These concerns had for a time been consigned to Antonio de Torres, in whose name, conjointly with that of Columbus, many of the official documents had been made out. In consequence of high and unreasonable demands on the part of Torres, he was removed from office, and Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Badajoz, reinstated. The papers had therefore to be made out anew, and fresh contracts formed. While these concerns were tardily attended to, the Queen was suddenly overwhelmed with affliction by the death of her only son Prince Juan, whose nuptials had been celebrated with such splendor in the spring. It was the first of a series of domestic calamities which assailed her affectionate heart, and overwhelmed her with affliction for the remainder of her days. In the midst of her distress however she still thought of Columbus. In consequence of his urgent representations of the misery to which the colony

must be reduced, two ships were despatched in the beginning of 1498, under the command of Pedro Fernandez Coronel, freighted with supplies. The necessary funds were advanced by the Queen herself, out of the moneys intended to form the endowment of her daughter Isabella, then betrothed to Emanuel, King of Portugal. An instance of her kind feeling toward Columbus was also evinced in the time of her affliction: his two sons, Diego and Fernando, had been pages to the deceased prince; the Queen now took them in the same capacity into her own service.

With all this zealous disposition on the part of the Queen Columbus still met with the most injurious and discouraging delays in preparing the six remaining vessels for his voyage. His cold-blooded enemy Fonseca, having the superintendence of Indian affairs, was enabled to impede and retard all his plans. The various petty officers and agents employed in the concerns of the armament were many of them the minions of the Bishop, and knew that they were gratifying him in annoying Columbus. They looked upon the latter as a man declining in popularity, who might be offended with impunity; they scrupled not therefore to throw all kinds of difficulties in his path

and to treat him occasionally with that arrogance which petty and ignoble men in place are prone to exercise.

It seems almost incredible at the present day that such important and glorious enterprises should have been subject to such despicable molestations. Columbus bore them all with silent indignation. He was a stranger in the land he was benefiting; he felt that the popular tide was setting against him, and that it was necessary to tolerate many present grievances for the sake of effecting his great purposes. So wearied and disheartened however did he become by the impediments artfully thrown in his way, and so disgusted by the prejudices of the fickle public, that he at one time thought of abandoning his discoveries altogether. He was chiefly induced to persevere by his grateful attachment to the Queen, and his desire to achieve something that might cheer and animate her under her afflictions.*

At length, after all kinds of irritating delays, the six vessels were fitted for sea, though it was impossible to conquer the popular repugnance to the service sufficiently to enlist the allotted number of men. In addition to the persons in employ already enumerated, a physician, surgeon, and apothecary were sent out

* Letter of Columbus to the nurse of Prince Juan.

for the relief of the colony, and several priests to replace Friar Boyle and certain of his discontented brethren, while a number of musicians were embarked by the Admiral to cheer and enliven the colonists.

The insolence which Columbus had suffered from the minions of Fonseca throughout this long protracted time of preparation harassed him to the last moment of his sojourn in Spain, and followed him to the very water's edge. Among the worthless hirelings who annoyed him, the most noisy and presuming was one Ximeno Breviesca, treasurer or accountant of Fonseca. He was not an old Christian, observes the venerable Las Casas, by which it is to be understood that he was either a Jew or a Moor converted to the Catholic faith. He had an impudent front and an unbridled tongue, and, echoing the sentiments of his patron the Bishop, had been loud in his abuse of the Admiral and his enterprises. The very day when the squadron was on the point of weighing anchor Columbus was assailed by the insolence of this Ximeno, either on the shore when about to embark or on board of his ship where he had just entered. In the hurry of the moment he forgot his usual self-command; his indignation, hitherto repressed, suddenly burst forth; he struck the despicable

minion to the ground, and kicked him repeatedly, venting in this unguarded paroxysm the accumulated griefs and vexations which had long rankled in his mind.*

Nothing could demonstrate more strongly what Columbus had previously suffered from the machinations of unworthy men than this transport of passion, so unusual in his well-governed temper. He deeply regretted it, and in a letter written some time afterwards to the sovereigns, he endeavored to obviate the injury it might do him in their opinion through the exaggeration and false coloring of his enemies. His apprehensions were not ill-founded, for Las Casas attributes the humiliating measures shortly after adopted by the sovereigns toward Columbus to the unfavorable impression produced by this affair. It had happened near at home, as it were, under the very eye of the sovereigns ; it spoke therefore more quickly to their feelings than more important allegations from a distance. The personal castigation of a public officer was represented as a flagrant instance of the vindictive temper of Columbus, and a corroboration of the charges of cruelty and oppression sent from the colony. As Ximeno was a creature of the invidious Fonseca, the affair

* Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 126, MS.

was represented to the sovereigns in the most odious point of view. Thus the generous intentions of princes and the exalted services of their subjects are apt to be defeated by the invention of cold and crafty men in place. By his implacable hostility to Columbus, and the secret obstructions which he threw in the way of the most illustrious of human enterprises, Fonseca has insured perpetuity to his name, coupled with the contempt of every generous mind.

Book X.

Chapter II.

DEPARTURE OF COLUMBUS FROM SPAIN ON HIS THIRD VOYAGE—DISCOVERY OF TRINIDAD.

[1498.]

ON the 30th of May, 1498, Columbus set sail from the port of San Lucar de Barrameda, with his squadron of six vessels, on his third voyage of discovery. The route he proposed to take was different from that pursued in his former voyages. He intended to depart from the Cape Verde Islands, sailing to the southwest until he should come under the equinoctial line, then to steer directly westward with the favor of the trade-winds until he should arrive at land, or find himself in the longitude of Hispaniola. Various considerations induced him to adopt this course. In his preceding voyage, when he coasted the southern side of Cuba under the belief that it was the continent of Asia, he had observed that it swept off

toward the south. From this circumstance and from information gathered among the natives of the Caribbee Islands, he was induced to believe that a great tract of the mainland lay to the south of the countries he had already discovered. King John II. of Portugal appears to have entertained a similar idea, as Herrera records an opinion expressed by that monarch that there was a continent in the southern ocean.* If this were the case, it was supposed by Columbus that, in proportion as he approached the equator and extended his discoveries to climates more and more under the torrid influences of the sun, he should find the productions of nature sublimated by its rays to more perfect and precious qualities. He was strengthened in this belief by a letter written to him at the command of the Queen by one Jayme Ferrer, an eminent and learned lapidary, who, in the course of his trading for precious stones and metals, had been in the Levant and in various parts of the East; had conversed with the merchants of the remote parts of Asia and Africa, and the natives of India, Arabia, and Ethiopia, and was considered deeply versed in geography generally, but especially in the natural histories of those countries whence the valuable merchandise in

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. iii., cap. 9.

which he dealt was procured. In this letter Ferrer assured Columbus that, according to his experience, the rarest objects of commerce, such as gold, precious stones, drugs, and spices were chiefly to be found in the regions about the equinoctial line, where the inhabitants were black or darkly colored; and that until the Admiral should arrive among people of such complexions, he did not think he would find those articles in great abundance.*

Columbus expected to find such people more to the south. He recollected that the natives of Hispaniola had spoken of black men who had once come to their island from the south and southeast, the heads of whose javelins were of a sort of metal which they called *guanin*. They had given the Admiral specimens of this metal, which on being assayed in Spain proved to be a mixture of eighteen parts gold, six silver, and eight copper, a proof of valuable mines in the country whence they came. Charlevoix conjectures that these black people may have come from the Canaries or the western coast of Africa, and been driven by tempest to the shores of Hispaniola.† It is probable however that Columbus had been misinformed as to their color, or had

* Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom. ii., doc. 68.

† Charlevoix, *Hist. St. Domingo*, lib. iii., p. 162.

misunderstood his informants. It is difficult to believe that the natives of Africa or the Canaries could have performed a voyage of such magnitude in the frail and scantily provided barks they were accustomed to use.

It was to ascertain the truth of all these suppositions, and, if correct, to arrive at the favored and opulent countries about the equator, inhabited by people of similar complexion with those of the Africans under the line, that Columbus in his present voyage to the New World took a course much farther to the south than that which he had hitherto pursued.

Having heard that a French squadron was cruising off Cape St. Vincent, he stood to the southwest after leaving St. Lucar, touching at the islands of Porto Santo and Madeira, where he remained a few days taking in wood and water and other supplies, and then continued his course to the Canary Islands. On the 19th of June he arrived at Gomera, where there lay at anchor a French cruiser with two Spanish prizes. On seeing the squadron of Columbus standing into the harbor the captain of the privateer put to sea in all haste followed by his prizes, one of which, in the hurry of the moment, left part of her crew on shore, making sail with only four of her arma-

ment and six Spanish prisoners. The Admiral at first mistook them for merchant ships alarmed by his warlike appearance; when informed of the truth, however, he sent three of his vessels in pursuit, but they were too distant to be overtaken. The six Spaniards, however, on board of one of the prizes, seeing assistance at hand, rose on their captors, and the Admiral's vessels coming up, the prize was retaken and brought back in triumph to the port. The Admiral relinquished the ship to the captain and gave up the prisoners to the governor of the island, to be exchanged for six Spaniards carried off by the cruiser.*

Leaving Gomera on the 21st of June Columbus divided his squadron off the island of Ferro; three of his ships he despatched direct for Hispaniola to carry supplies to the colony. One of these ships was commanded by Alonzo Sanchez de Caravajal, native of Baeza, a man of much worth and integrity. The second by Pedro de Arana of Cordova, brother of Doña Beatrix Henriquez, the mother of the Admiral's second son Fernando; he was cousin also of the unfortunate officer who commanded the fortress of La Navidad at the time of the massacre. The third was commanded by Juan Antonio Columbus (or Colombo), a

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 65.

Genoese, related to the Admiral, and a man of much judgment and capacity. These captains were alternately to have command and bear the signal light a week at a time. The Admiral carefully pointed out their course. When they came in sight of Hispaniola they were to steer for the south side, for the new port and town, which he supposed to be by this time established in the mouth of the Ozema, according to royal orders sent out by Coronel. With the three remaining vessels the Admiral prosecuted his voyage towards the Cape Verde Islands. The ship in which he sailed was decked; the other two were merchant caravels.* As he advanced within the tropics the change of climate and the close and sultry weather brought on a severe attack of the gout, followed by a violent fever. Notwithstanding his painful illness he enjoyed the full possession of his faculties and continued to keep his reckoning and make his observations with his usual vigilance and minuteness.

On the 27th of June he arrived among the Cape Verde Islands, which, instead of the freshness and verdure which their name would betoken, presented an aspect of the most cheerless sterility. He remained among these islands

* P. Martyr, decad. i., lib. vi.

but a very few days, being disappointed in his expectations of obtaining goats' flesh for ships' provisions and cattle for stock for the island of Hispaniola. To procure them would require some delay; in the meantime the health of himself and of his people suffered under the influence of the weather. The atmosphere was loaded with clouds and vapors; neither sun nor star were to be seen; a sultry, depressing temperature prevailed; and the livid looks of the inhabitants bore witness to the insalubrity of the climate.*

Leaving the island of Buena Vista on the 5th of July Columbus stood to the southwest, intending to continue on until he found himself under the equinoctial line. The currents, however, which ran to the north and northwest among these islands impeded his progress and kept him for two days in sight of the Island del Fuego. The volcanic summit of this island, which, seen at a distance, resembled a church with a lofty steeple, and which was said at times to emit smoke and flames, was the last point discerned of the Old World.

Continuing to the southwest about one hundred and twenty leagues he found himself, on the 13th of July, according to his observations, in the fifth degree of north latitude. He had

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 65.

entered that region which extends for eight or ten degrees on each side of the line, and is known among seamen by the name of the calm latitudes. The trade-winds from the southeast and northeast, meeting in the neighborhood of the equator, neutralize each other, and a steady calmness of the elements is produced. The whole sea is like a mirror, and vessels remain almost motionless with flapping sails; the crews panting under the heat of a vertical sun, unmitigated by any refreshing breeze. Weeks are sometimes employed in crossing this torpid track of the ocean.

The weather for some time past had been cloudy and oppressive, but on the 13th there was a bright and burning sun. The wind suddenly fell and a dead sultry calm commenced, which lasted for eight days. The air was like a furnace; the tar melted, the seams of the ship yawned; the salt meat became putrid; the wheat was parched as if with fire; the hoops shrank from the wine- and water-casks, some of which leaked and others burst; while the heat in the holds of the vessels was so suffocating that no one could remain below a sufficient time to prevent the damage that was taking place. The mariners lost all strength and spirits, and sank under the oppressive heat. It seemed as if the old fable of the

torrid zone was about to be realized; and that they were approaching a fiery region where it would be impossible to exist. It is true the heavens were for a great part of the time overcast, and there were drizzling showers; but the atmosphere was close and stifling, and there was that combination of heat and moisture which relaxes all the energies of the human frame.

During this time the Admiral suffered extremely from the gout, but, as usual, the activity of his mind, heightened by his anxiety, allowed him no indulgence nor repose. He was in an unknown part of the ocean, where everything depended upon his vigilance and sagacity; and was continually watching the phenomena of the elements, and looking out for signs of land. Finding the heat so intolerable he altered his course and steered to the southwest, hoping to find a milder temperature farther on, even under the same parallel. He had observed in his previous voyages that, after sailing westward a hundred leagues from the Azores, a wonderful change took place in the sea and sky, both becoming serene and bland, and the air temperate and refreshing. He imagined that a peculiar mildness and suavity prevailed over a great tract of ocean extending from north to south, into which the navigator sail-

ing from east to west would suddenly enter, as if crossing a line. The event seemed to justify his theory, for after making their way slowly for some time to the westward, through an ordeal of heats and calms, with a murky, stifling atmosphere, the ships all at once emerged into a genial region, a pleasant, cooling breeze played over the surface of the sea and gently filled their sails, the close and drizzling clouds broke away, the sky became serene and clear, and the sun shone forth with all its splendor, but no longer with a burning heat.

Columbus had intended on reaching this temperate tract to have stood once more to the south and then westward; but the late parching weather had opened the seams of his ships and caused them to leak excessively, so that it was necessary to seek a harbor as soon as possible, where they might be refitted. Much of the provisions also was spoiled, and the water nearly exhausted. He kept on therefore directly to the west, trusting, from the flights of birds and other favorable indications, he should soon arrive at land. Day after day passed away without his expectations being realized. The distresses of his men became continually more urgent; wherefore, supposing himself in the longitude of the Caribbee

Islands, he bore away towards the northward in search of them.*

On the 31st of July there was not above one cask of water remaining in each ship, when about mid-day a mariner at the mast-head beheld the summits of three mountains rising above the horizon, and gave the joyful cry of land. As the ships drew nearer it was seen that these mountains were united at the base. Columbus had determined to give the first land he should behold the name of Trinity. The appearance of these three mountains united into one struck him as a singular coincidence; and with a solemn feeling of devotion he gave the island the name of La Trinidad, which it bears at the present day.†

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 67.
† *Ibid, ubi sup.*

Chapter III.

VOYAGE THROUGH THE GULF OF PARIA.

[1498.]

SHAPING his course for the island, Columbus approached its eastern extremity, to which he gave the name of Punta de la Galera, from a rock in the sea, which resembled a galley under sail. He was obliged to coast for five leagues along the southern shore before he could find safe anchorage. On the following day (August 1st) he continued coasting westward in search of water, and a convenient harbor where the vessels might be careened. He was surprised at the verdure and fertility of the country, having expected to find it more parched and sterile as he approached the equator; whereas he beheld groves of palm-trees and luxuriant forests sweeping down to the sea-side, with fountains and running streams. The shores were low and uninhabited; but the country rose in the interior, was cultivated in many places, and

enlivened by hamlets and scattered habitations. In a word, the softness and purity of the climate, and the verdure, freshness, and sweetness of the country appeared to him to equal the delights of early spring in the beautiful province of Valencia.*

Anchoring at a point to which he gave the name of Punta de la Playa, he sent the boats on shore for water. They found an abundant and limpid brook, at which they filled their casks, but there was no safe harbor for the vessels, nor could they meet with any of the islanders, though they found prints of footsteps and various fishing implements left behind in the hurry of flight. There also were tracks of animals which they supposed to be goats, but which must have been deer, with which, as it was afterwards ascertained, the island abounded.

While coasting the island Columbus beheld land to the south, stretching to the distance of more than twenty leagues. It was that low tract of coast intersected by the numerous branches of the Oroonoko, but the Admiral supposing it to be an island, gave it the name of La Isla Santa; little imagining that he now for the first time beheld that continent, that

* Letter of Columbus to the sovereigns from Hispaniola, Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom. i.

Terra Firma, which had been the object of his earnest search.

On the 2d of August he continued on to the southwest point of Trinidad, which he called Point Arenal. It stretched towards a corresponding point of Terra Firma, making a narrow pass with a high rock in the centre, to which he gave the name of El Gallo. Near this pass the ships cast anchor. As they were approaching this place, a large canoe with five-and-twenty Indians put off from the shore, but paused on coming within bow-shot and hailed the ships in a language which no one on board understood. Columbus tried to allure the savages on board by friendly signs, by the display of looking-glasses, basins of polished metal, and various glittering trinkets, but all in vain. They remained gazing in mute wonder for above two hours, with their paddles in their hands ready to take to flight on the least attempt to approach them. They were all young men, well-formed and naked, excepting bands and fillets of cotton about their heads and colored cloth of the same about their loins. They were armed with bows and arrows, the latter feathered and tipped with bone, and they had bucklers, an article of armor seen for the first time among the inhabitants of the New World.

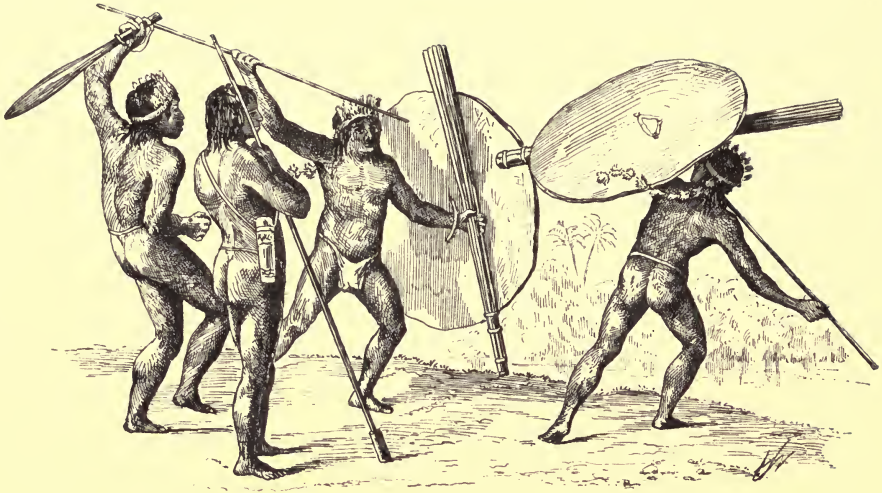
Finding all other means to attract them ineffectual, Columbus now tried the power of music. He knew the fondness of the Indians for dances performed to the sound of their rude drums and the chant of their traditional ballads. He ordered something similar to be executed on the deck of his ship, where while one man sang to the beat of the tabor and the sound of other musical instruments, the ship-boys danced after the popular Spanish fashion. No sooner however did this symphony strike up, than the Indians, mistaking it for a signal of hostilities, put their bucklers on their arms, seized their bows, and let fly a shower of arrows. This rude salutation was immediately answered by the discharge of a couple of cross-bows, which immediately put the auditors to flight and concluded this singular entertainment.

Though thus shy of the Admiral's vessel, they approached one of the caravels without hesitation, and, running under the stern, had a parley with the pilot, who gave a cap and a mantle to the one who appeared to be the chieftain. He received the presents with great delight, inviting the pilot by signs to come to land, where he should be well entertained, and receive great presents in return. On his appearing to consent, they went to shore to wait for him. The pilot put off in the boat of the

caravel to ask permission of the Admiral; but the Indians, seeing him go on board the hostile ship, suspected some treachery, and springing into their canoe, darted away, nor was anything more seen of them.*

The complexion and other physical characteristics of these savages caused much surprise and speculation in the mind of Columbus. Supposing himself in the seventh degree of latitude, though actually in the tenth, he expected to find the inhabitants similar to the natives of Africa under the same parallel, who were black and ill-shaped, with crisp hair or rather wool; whereas, these were well formed, had long hair, and were even fairer than those more distant from the equator. The climate, also, instead of being hotter as he approached the equinoctial, appeared more temperate. He was now in the dog-days, yet the nights and mornings were so cool that it was necessary to use covering as in winter. This is the case in many parts of the torrid zone, especially in calm weather, when there is no wind; for Nature, by heavy dews, in the long nights of those latitudes, cools and refreshes

* *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 88. P. Martyr, decad. i., lib. vi. Las Casas, *Hist. Ind.*, lib. i., cap. 138. MS. Letter of Columbus to the Castilian sovereigns, Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom. i.



the earth, after the great heat of the days. Columbus was at first greatly perplexed by these contradictions to the course of nature, as observed in the Old World; they were in opposition also to the expectations he had founded on the theory of Ferrer the lapidary, but they gradually contributed to the formation of a theory that was springing up in his active imagination, and which will be presently shown.

After anchoring at Point Arenal, the crews were permitted to land and refresh themselves. There were no runs of water, but by sinking pits in the sand they soon obtained sufficient to fill the casks. The anchorage at this place, however, was extremely insecure. A rapid current set from the eastward through the strait formed by the mainland and the island of Trinidad, flowing, as Columbus observed, night and day, with as much fury as the Guadalquivir, when swollen by floods. In the pass between Point Arenal and its corresponding point, the confined current boiled and raged to such a degree, that he thought it was crossed by a reef of rocks and shoals, preventing all entrance, with others extending beyond, over which the waters roared like breakers on a rocky shore. To this pass, from its angry and dangerous appearance, he gave the name of Boca del Sierpe (The Mouth of the Serpent).

He thus found himself placed between two difficulties. The continual current from the east seemed to prevent all return, while the rocks which appeared to beset the pass threatened destruction if he should proceed. Being on board his ship, late at night, kept awake by painful illness and an anxious and watchful spirit, he heard a terrible roaring from the south, and beheld the sea heaped up, as it were, into a great ridge or hill, the height of the ship, covered with foam, and rolling towards him with a tremendous uproar. As this furious surge approached, rendered more terrible in appearance by the obscurity of night, he trembled for the safety of his vessels. His own ship was suddenly lifted up to such a height that he dreaded lest it should be overturned or cast upon the rocks, while another of the ships was torn violently from her anchorage. The crews were for a time in great consternation, fearing they should be swallowed up; but the mountainous surge passed on, and gradually subsided, after a violent contest with the counter-current of the strait.* This sudden rush of water, it is supposed, was caused by the swelling of one of the rivers

* Letter of Columbus to the Castilian sovereigns, Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom. i. Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. iii., cap. 10. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 69.

which flow into the gulf of Paria, and which were as yet unknown to Columbus.

Anxious to extricate himself from this dangerous neighborhood, he sent the boats on the following morning to sound the depths of water at the Boca del Sierpe, and to ascertain whether it was possible for ships to pass through to the northward. To his great joy they returned with a report that there were several fathoms of water, and currents and eddies setting both ways, either to enter or return. A favorable breeze prevailing, he immediately made sail, and passing through the formidable strait in safety, found himself in a tranquil expanse beyond.

He was now on the inner side of Trinidad. To his left spread the broad gulf since known by the name of Paria, which he supposed to be the open sea, but was surprised on tasting it to find the water fresh. He continued northward towards a mountain at the northwest point of the island, about fourteen leagues from Point Arenal. Here he beheld two lofty capes opposite each other, one on the island of Trinidad, the other to the west on the long promontory of Paria, which stretches from the mainland and forms the northern side of the gulf, but which Columbus mistook for an island, and named Isla de Gracia.

Between these capes there was another pass, which appeared even more dangerous than the Boca del Sierpe, being beset with rocks, among which the current forced its way with roaring turbulence. To this pass Columbus gave the name of Boca del Dragon. Not choosing to encounter its apparent dangers, he turned northward on Sunday, the 5th of August, and steered along the inner side of the supposed island of Gracia, intending to keep on until he came to the end of it, and then to strike northward into the free and open ocean, and shape his course for Hispaniola.

It was a fair and beautiful coast, indented with fine harbors lying close to each other; the country cultivated in many places, in others covered with fruit trees and stately forests, and watered by frequent streams. What greatly astonished Columbus was still to find the water fresh, and that it grew more and more so the farther he proceeded; it being that season of the year when the various rivers which empty themselves into this gulf are swollen by rains, and pour forth such quantities of fresh water as to conquer the saltness of the ocean. He was also surprised at the placidity of the sea, which appeared as tranquil and safe as one vast harbor, so that there was no need of seeking a port to anchor in.

As yet he had not been able to hold any communication with the people of this part of the New World. The shores which he had visited, though occasionally cultivated, were silent and deserted, and, excepting the fugitive party in the canoe at Point Arenal, he had seen nothing of the natives. After sailing several leagues along the coast he anchored on Monday, the 6th of August, at a place where there appeared signs of cultivation, and sent the boats on shore. They found recent traces of people, but not an individual was to be seen. The coast was hilly, covered with beautiful and fruitful groves, and abounding with monkeys. Continuing farther westward to where the country was more level, Columbus anchored in a river.

Immediately a canoe with three or four Indians came off to the caravel nearest to the shore, the captain of which, pretending a desire to accompany them to land, sprang into their canoe, overturned it, and with the assistance of his seamen, secured the Indians as they were swimming. When brought to the Admiral, he gave them beads, hawks'-bells, and sugar, and sent them highly gratified on shore, where many of their countrymen were assembled. This kind treatment had the usual effect. Such of the natives as had canoes came

off to the ships with the fullest confidence. They were tall of stature, finely formed, and free and graceful in their movements. Their hair was long and straight; some wore it cut short, but none of them braided it, as was the custom among the natives of Hispaniola. They were armed with bows, arrows, and targets; the men wore cotton cloths about their heads and loins, beautifully wrought with various colors, so as at a distance to look like silk; but the women were entirely naked. They brought bread, maize, and other eatables, with different kinds of beverages, some white, made from maize and resembling beer, and others green, of a vinous flavor, and expressed from various fruits. They appeared to judge of everything by the sense of smell, as others examine objects by the sight or touch. When they approached a boat they smelt of it and then of the people. In like manner everything that was given them was tried. They set but little value upon beads, but were extravagantly delighted with hawks'-bells. Brass was also held in high estimation; they appeared to find something extremely grateful in the smell of it, and called it *turey*, signifying that it was from the skies.*

From these Indians Columbus understood

* Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. iii., cap. 11.

that the name of their country was Paria, and that farther to the west he would find it more populous. Taking several of them to serve as guides and mediators he proceeded eight leagues westward to a point which he called Aguja or the Needle. Here he arrived at three o'clock in the morning. When the day dawned he was delighted with the beauty of the country. It was cultivated in many places, highly populous, and adorned with magnificent vegetation; habitations were interspersed among groves laden with fruit and flowers; grape-vines entwined themselves among the trees, and birds of brilliant plumage fluttered from branch to branch. The air was temperate and bland, and sweetened by the fragrance of flowers and blossoms, and numerous fountains and limpid streams kept up a universal verdure and freshness. Columbus was so much charmed with the beauty and amenity of this part of the coast that he gave it the name of The Gardens.

The natives came off in great numbers in canoes of superior construction to those hitherto seen, being very large and light, with a cabin in the centre for the accommodation of the owner and his family. They invited Columbus in the name of their king to come to land. Many of them had collars and burnished plates about their necks, of that inferior kind of gold

called by the Indians *guanin*. They say that it came from a high land, which they pointed out, at no great distance to the west, but intimated that it was dangerous to go there, either because the inhabitants were cannibals or the place infested by venomous animals.* But what aroused the attention and excited the cupidity of the Spaniards was the sight of strings of pearls round the arms of some of the natives. These, they informed Columbus, were procured on the sea-coast on the northern side of Paria, which he still supposed to be an island, and they showed the mother-of-pearl shells whence they had been taken. Anxious for further information and to secure specimens of these pearls to send to Spain, he despatched the boats to shore. A multitude of the natives came to the beach to receive them, headed by the chief cacique and his son. They treated the Spaniards with profound reverence, as beings descended from Heaven, and conducted them to a spacious house, the residence of the cacique, where they were regaled with bread and various fruits of excellent flavor and the different kinds of beverages already mentioned. While they were in the house, the men remained together at one end of it and the women

* Letter of Columbus to the Castilian sovereigns, Navarrete, *Colec.*, tom. i., p. 252.

at the other. After they had finished their collation at the house of the cacique, they were taken to that of his son, where a like repast was set before them. These people were remarkably affable, though at the same time they possessed a more intrepid and martial air and spirit than the natives of Cuba and Hispaniola. They were fairer, Columbus observes, than any he had yet seen, though so near to the equinoctial line where he had expected to find them of the color of Ethiopians. Many ornaments of gold were seen among them, but all of an inferior quality; one Indian had a piece of the size of an apple. They had various kinds of domesticated parrots, one of a light-green color, with a yellow neck, and the tips of the wings of a bright red; others of the size of domestic fowls, and of a vivid scarlet, excepting some azure feathers in the wings. These they readily gave to the Spaniards; but what the latter most coveted were the pearls, of which they saw many necklaces and bracelets among the Indian women. The latter gladly gave them in exchange for hawks'-bells or any article of brass, and several specimens of fine pearls were procured for the Admiral to send to the sovereigns.*

* Letter of Columbus. Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, decad. i., lib. iii., cap. 11. *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 70.

The kindness and amity of the people were heightened by an intelligent demeanor and a martial frankness. They seemed worthy of the beautiful country they inhabited. It was a cause of great concern both to them and the Spaniards that they could not understand each other's language. They conversed however by signs; mutual good-will made their intercourse easy and pleasant; and at the hour of vespers the Spaniards returned on board of their ships highly gratified with their entertainment.

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